



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
**January 8 - 15, 2016**

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# Aboriginal Arts & Culture

## Metis dancing kept MRSS students on their toes



Jillian Currie-Metis led a Metis dancing workshop in the Maple Ridge Secondary School gym last month.

*by* Troy Landreville - Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Times  
*posted* Jan 7, 2016 at 6:00 PM

Maple Ridge Secondary students had a lesson in First Nations culture and a whole lot of exercise at the same time on Dec. 14.

For their Physical Education block, the students in Grades 8 to 12 learned Metis dancing, which will be phased in with the school's new curriculum next year.

"We thought we should get an early start on it," MRSS teacher Kira Sinow said.

Leading the lessons was Jillian Currie-Metis, a descendant of Peter Fiddler and his cree.

She is an Aboriginal support worker for the Maple Ridge school district.

The lessons/workshop was a good fit for the school's annual dance unit, Sinow explained: "we thought this is the perfect opportunity to incorporate the new curriculum."

With more than 1,100 Aboriginal students in School District 42, the majority of whom are Metis, Sinow said it's important for the MRSS students to learn about different facets of First Nations culture.

"The kids loved it," Sinow said, adding, "[They were] fully engaged and respectful."

Direct Link: <http://www.mrtimes.com/community/364595131.html>

## Aboriginal cultures inspire Vancouver architect

Nancy Mackin does landscape and building design influenced by her interactions with B.C. First Nations

BY JENNY LEE, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 7, 2016



Vancouver architect Nancy Mackin at a Tsimshian longhouse.

Most B.C. architects work in urban centres, but Nancy Mackin works in the northernmost reaches of the province, up past Terrace in the Nass River Valley, up where winters are cold and populations sparse.

“It’s the furthest point on the coast you can go in B.C.,” said Mackin, who specializes in landscape and building design for indigenous people.

Four Nisga’a communities totalling 2,000 people live in the area.

“It’s mountainous with a beautiful river, and the culture is steeped in tradition. Lots of traditional ways of learning about the land. Lots of fishing,” West-Vancouver based Mackin said.

The work involves very different considerations from the urban highrises Mackin designed earlier in her career. A health centre treatment room, for example, needs to be much larger than in the city. Patients will often arrive with four or five family members.

Keeping extended family members directly involved is not only culturally but medically important in the remote region, Mackin said.

On a recent Health Canada funded project in Inuvik, Mackin researched and helped pass on community knowledge of traditional survival shelters once used along traplines.

She found local experts — one a 94-year-old woman — who dug into their memories for how to build traditional Gwich'in and Inuvialuit arched willow bough structures that used to be clad with moss and animal skins.

“They had complete (memories) of how nice they were, and how warm they were,” Mackin said. The knowledge hadn't been used in 80 or 90 years, she said. Intriguingly, Mackin found similar turf-clad, dome-shaped ice-houses in the architectural history of Sami communities in northern Norway.

With community assistance, Mackin taught local teenagers to build modernized versions of the Inuit structures in minus 30 C weather, using tarps instead of skins.

“It was quite exciting how relatively easy it was to build. When it was tied all together, you had this incredibly strong structure you couldn't push over. It's quite amazing and warm.”

The youth are now able to build themselves emergency shelters in the harsh climate, and at least one community member who hadn't known about these structures before the project decided to build one over his ice-fishing hole.

Mackin first visited the Nass Valley in the mid-1990s to design a new Nisga'a Nation administration building and became captivated by the area.

“I experienced these different areas of Canada I really didn't know existed, places in Canada that had a strong culture and different languages.”

One thing led to another, and she went back to school for an interdisciplinary doctorate in architecture, landscape architecture and First Nations studies, and the local community adopted her as Nisga'a and Tsimshian.

Mackin believes people can become more healthy by connecting to the land using architecture as a catalyst.

An architect can “become, in some respects, an advocate for the community,” she said. “You can put things on paper or in a model or in a nice drawing that can become very compelling. Like adding a fitness area to a wellness centre or adding a culturally responsive playground to a daycare centre. Then the people who are supplying the funding for this say ‘You know, that might be a good idea.’”

Mackin often brings model building materials to communities to spark conversation and ideas, and to draw out traditional knowledge for building and managing landscapes.

“You have to be willing to spend the time to let the ideas come gradually,” she said, but people “have traditionally used plants to build buildings in a very ecological way,” and she often uses the ensuing knowledge in new ways.

“What material can we come up with that mimics the properties of moss, a material that actually grows together and becomes not only an insulating layer but also a waterproofing layer? Biomimicry is having a huge impact in architecture right now.”

Many vernacular or traditional rural buildings of the Canadian north have technologies that keep people warm and dry with minimal energy expenditure, she said.

Long tunnel-like entrances contain a depressed area to trap cold air. Raised sleeping areas take advantage of rising warm air. Windbreak walls keep snow from building up against entrances. Mackin is now working with the Canadian High Arctic Research Station and Nunavut communities to create buildings using these ideas.

Mackin has worked on many Nass Valley projects over the last decade, including a couple of health centres, an administration building, some multi-family housing and a daycare centre. Her passions have brought valuable community additions to these projects including ethnobotanical food gardens for the Prince Rupert and Terrace campuses of Northwest Community College, and a playground in Laxgalts’ap, a remote First Nations Nass Valley village. The playground, which took eight years to come to fruition, has a culturally responsive design including climbing platforms with hills and edible plantings, and a cedar climbing structure using a modified longhouse concept.

The Architectural Institute of B.C. recently awarded Mackin the Barbara Dalrymple Memorial Award for Community Service in recognition of her work “with First Nations youth in their communities, listening to their concerns and advocating on their behalf,” AIBC CEO Mark Vernon said.

Up in the remote north of the B.C., this Vancouver architect has created a niche practice that explores solutions to familiar urban issues of health, wellness, community and youth.

“I think architecture is one of the ways to bring them to the forefront of our experience,” she said.

Read

more:<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/entertainment/aboriginal+cultures+inspire+vancouver+architect/11637398/story.html#ixzz3wxiJXr00>

## **Saskatoon indigenous fashion collective teaming with global runway project**

## **Her4Directions is bringing the Indigenous Runway Project to Saskatoon in Fall 2016**

CBC News Posted: Jan 08, 2016 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 08, 2016 4:00 AM CT



MaryLou Mintram, Tory-Lynn Wanotch and Helen Orro are some of the women behind Her 4 Directions. (Leisha Grebinski/CBC)

An initiative out of Australia is coming to Saskatoon to make sure that when it comes to aboriginal inspiration on the catwalk, indigenous designers are involved.

The Indigenous Runway Project has teamed up with Her4Directions fashion collective for a globetrotting fashion adventure, which includes a special runway experience in the bridge city in September.

Designer Helen Oro became involved in the project while showcasing her traditional beadwork accessories line at Melbourne Fashion Week in Australia in 2015.

"Last year, when I attended I made a great friendship with them and we stayed connected," Oro explained on CBC's *Saskatoon Morning*.

"Their vision is to bring indigenous designers and models together and get them a foot into the mainstream fashion world."

The Indigenous Runway Project began a few years ago in Australia to support and empower young aboriginal designers and models. The project has reached other global indigenous communities in places such as New Zealand, Arizona, Africa, and now Canada.

"We want our event to be huge. We have people coming from overseas and we want to give them that really great experience that I received when I was down there and give them that cultural exchange," Oro said.

The week long event in Saskatoon will include training, workshops, and special direction for local models. At the end, Oro said the runway will showcase designs and entertainment.

But it's not just the excitement of the runway. Oro said it's an important opportunity to show the mainstream fashion world that indigenous designers are out there.

"There is so much going on in the mainstream where they rip off designs from sacred designs from tribes and put them on the runway," Oro said.

"Some of these designs have been in the families and tribe for years and they aren't supposed to be used [like that]... It's part of their history, their culture, their family, and it tells a story. So, for designers to just grab that and put it on the runway without any knowledge or asking for approval is really disrespectful."



The Indigenous Runway Project has teamed up with Saskatoon's Her4Directions. (Indigenous Runway Project/Facebook)

Oro said the problem persists because they aren't being heard, and the Indigenous Runway Project is a way to make their voices louder.

"I think it is a chance for everyone to see what we have to offer as designers. We are able to create our own labels and our own designs," she said.

"If they are interested in working with us, hey that's even better, but having an event like this, it just opens the door for us even more for people to see us, because not everyone knows where to look ."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-indigenous-fashion-collective-teaming-with-global-runway-project-1.3394787>

## **Documentary on Inuit women's tattoos may get wider release**



## Filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril had feared doc would spark copycat tattoo trend among non-Inuit

By Kieran Oudshoorn, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 09, 2016 5:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 09, 2016 7:52 PM CT



Alethea Arnaquq-Baril says she was initially hesitant to release her documentary *Tunniit: Retracing the Lines of Inuit Tattoos* widely for fear of cultural appropriation. (Kieran Oudshoorn/CBC)

A Inuk filmmaker says she is finally ready to release her film to wider audiences after years of being hesitant to screen her documentary on traditional Inuit tattooing to non-Inuit audiences for fear of cultural appropriation.

Six years ago, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril finished her film *Tunniit: Retracing the Lines of Inuit Tattoos*. The documentary is an intensely personal and emotional exploration born of Arnaquq-Baril's desire to root herself in her traditions and reconnect with her ancestors.

What she didn't expect was that she would become the go-to expert on Inuit tattooing, for both Inuit and non-Inuit.

"I don't want to be seen as the person who is controlling who can get [Inuit tattoos] and who cannot, it's not up to me, but I can make it much, much easier for non-Inuit to access our history and our knowledge by putting this film out there, so I hesitated," said Arnaquq-Baril.

Through interviews with elders across Nunavut, Arnaquq-Baril's film describes how the practice of tattooing women, which she says used to be nearly universal, was all but stamped out in just one generation as a result of the concerted efforts of Christian missionaries.

Arnaquq-Baril says the cultural significance of Inuit tattooing is great, often marking the maturing of girls into womanhood, but she also says it's "fragile" and that non-Inuit copying the tattoo designs would be disastrous for Inuit trying to reclaim their culture.



## **'A physical embodiment of our culture'**

Dion Kaszas, a member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation from interior British Columbia, is a professional tattoo artist, a cultural practitioner and is doing his masters thesis on how to revive indigenous tattoo traditions.



Dion Kaszas, a member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation from interior British Columbia, is a professional tattoo artist, a cultural practitioner and is doing his masters thesis on how to awaken sleeping indigenous tattoo traditions. (Wes Wilson)

"Indigenous tattooing and the revival of indigenous tattooing is happening on so many amazing levels throughout the indigenous world," he said.

Kaszas said many indigenous peoples use tattooing as a form of political resistance while others who have been displaced from their homelands tattoo themselves as a way of reconnecting to their heritage.

"[Tattoos are] a physical embodiment of our spirituality, a physical embodiment of our culture, a physical embodiment of who we are," he said.

## **Reclaiming indigenous design**

In March of last year a group of Indigenous women launched a campaign called ReMatriate. The campaign started as a response to cultural appropriation on the fashion runway but has since grown to encompass a larger mandate of representing Indigenous woman in an empowering way.



Kelly Edzerza-Bapty is one of the co-founders of ReMatriate, a campaign that started as a response to cultural appropriation on the fashion runway but has since grown to encompass a larger mandate of representing Indigenous woman in an empowering way. (ReMatriate)

"There is still a certain amount of shaming that happens to indigenous women and our cultures," said Kelly Edzerza-Bapty, one of the co-founders of ReMatriate.

"So we decided we had to take action and show authentic representations of true indigenous textiles, fashions and regalia and us owning our culture."

Filmmaker Arnaquq-Baril said she is inspired by ReMatriate and what she called an explosion of Inuit women now getting tattoos.

"Now that I can't count all the tattooed women on one hand, I am less afraid to show the film to non-natives," Arnaquq-Baril said.

"What I am going to try to do with the film now is that when I show it, explain how important it is for Inuit to reclaim this tradition and that we are given some time to enjoy this resurgence."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/film-inuit-tattoos-1.3396160>

## **New Phrase Book encourages language continuity**

Create: 01/09/2016 - 05:13

Author: Geoff Shields- Special to Wawatay News



Patricia Ningewance is well known for her work in keeping First Nations languages alive and well by publishing a number of books dealing with the subject, notably Talking Gookom's Language. She was in Thunder Bay with Wawatay radio announcer and translator Jerry Sawanas on December 19 -20 to launch the latest of four pocket phrase books (the previous three are in Ojibwe, Swampy Cree and Inuktitut) dealing with the Oji-Cree language.

Opening at the Waverley Resource Library they explained to a small but enthusiastic group the importance of keeping native language alive while utilizing a practical demonstration of calling up members of the audience to ask a question from the book in Oji-Cree which they then answered.

Ningewance explained about her involvement in indigenous language. "Well I first began with a book called Survival Ojibwe, which was very popular but now out of print. I then put out a bigger version called Talking Gookom's Language which was also very popular, I teach Ojibwe at the University of Manitoba, but the pocket series I had always wanted to do and I had a drawer full of phrases text I could use so I made them into phrase book topics, things that a person would need to know to get around in the community or in everyday situations such as talking on the phone or visiting places like the clinic, hospital, the social workers office or in the bush and then I made it so that it contained all sorts of medical terminology so that's intended also for fluent speakers, people who work in lawyers offices, nursing stations any of those programs where they need to say different things so the books have got two purposes, one for learners and one for professional fluent people." She added, "I did the first one in Ojibwe and it was really successful and then I had it translated into Inuit and that's been out for maybe seven years now and later I had it translated into Swampy Cree-Northern Manitoba area."

One of the greatest concerns is the fact that the younger generation is losing touch with their traditional language when asked if her books helped to keep it alive she replied, "I think so, because with pocket Ojibwe which has been around for awhile, when I see young people buying it and they sell it at gas stations in Winnipeg and at powwows and a lot of people buy it, they thank me for getting it printed. They really appreciate that they have a small book like that where they can use phrases from it, where they can increase

their vocabulary with the language that is in it and it has place names and that's important that we name the places in our regions in our language."

Following the library another launch took place later that afternoon at the Fort William Arts and Craft Fair, which met with success.

Monday the 21st saw them at the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Hospital for a final presentation where a large crowd gathered to listen, participate and to buy copies of the book.

Sawanas shared his thoughts on the launchings.

"I think we have been looking for resources for our community members and also others that want to learn our language and there are quite a few and so Pat started doing these pocket dictionaries/ phrase books and I think it is so important to have these materials because people don't know where to look for resources to help them learn their languages or people from other cultures wanting to learn our languages so when she asked me, I thought it was such a great idea that she is doing this, I jumped at the chance to help her." He continued, "It took a few months to get all the phrases down. If you go up North and you want to go to the medical center, airport or band office it provides all the questions so that you can find your way around the community and that's the beauty of this book, once you go into the community you have your phrase book and that's how you can begin good conversations on language.

People love to be engaged with others learning their language so I am really hoping that especially the communities will take to these phrase books and use them because you need to start somewhere and this is a great starting point. I think it's a very good way for getting people talking." He concluded, "This is a new thing that's happening amongst our people, where we are promoting our languages and when you promote yourself you create excitement and I hope it picks up and goes everywhere."

Adrian Lawrence is a teacher at North Spirit First Nations he attended the library launch and shared, "Today some of the things I have known already. The sounds in Oji-Cree are quite different in English and the annotated and inanimate I find really interesting. No Oji-Cree is not a dead language, there are still thousands of people who speak it and it's important that it doesn't disappear."

James Morris Executive Director of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority who attended the Meno Ya Win launch concurred. "We have to do something because dealing with languages is a big job and this is a good start. It is also a good way of helping young people retain their language, you can lose your language in one generation and because English is so available, the teaching system is English the media is in English you have to deal with all that. I think this is a great undertaking and we need more of this."

Ningewance is currently working on a book of legends. “ Because my Mom was a great storyteller and I would like to write out her stories and have them illustrated in the language and have translations of them at the back. The mandate from my company is to publish in the language so when people ask me to publish their poems or short stories in English, I won’t touch them. It’s got to be in the language ”she said.

For order enquiries contact Mazinaate Inc. at [patningewance@gmail.com](mailto:patningewance@gmail.com) Ph. (204) 774-8007, Fax (204) 489-3869.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.wawataynews.ca/culture/new-phrase-book-encourages-language-continuity>

## **A Tribe Called Red: New voice for Canada's indigenous community**

BY [AEDAN HELMER](#), OTTAWA SUN

FIRST POSTED: FRIDAY, JANUARY 08, 2016 03:49 PM EST |

UPDATED: FRIDAY, JANUARY 08, 2016 04:03 PM EST



A Tribe Called Red (from left, 2oolman, DJ Bear Witness and DJ NDN, return to the NAC for the fifth anniversary NAC Presents gala Saturday. SUBMITTED PHOTO/ Falling Tree Photography

Art and politics are forever entwined, and in Canada’s political heartland, perhaps no artists are as fierce in their beliefs as A Tribe Called Red.

Returning to Ottawa and setting to work on the long-anticipated follow-up to their groundbreaking Nation II Nation, the electro collective will headline the NAC Presents fifth anniversary gala. They will also launch the NAC’s indigenous series, inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

For founding DJ Bear Witness, along with DJ NDN and newest member 2oolman, art and politics are “heavily connected” in their own community and beyond.

“When you talk about people going through colonization and oppression, who have not had a voice – and that extends beyond here in Canada – the first place that voice comes from is from the arts,” said Bear Witness.

“It’s a harder thing to shut down when it’s in art. It has a broader reach, so arts and politics become incredibly intertwined.

“It wasn’t even something we set out to do. We wanted to start a dance party, we didn’t have a political agenda. But that became political very quickly and became a responsibility that we had to step up to, using the attention we were getting to bring attention to issues that were important to the indigenous community.”

That responsibility was hammered home during a recent sit-down with Canadian folk legend Buffy Sainte-Marie, who contacted the group about remixing one of her songs, Working For the Government, which recently debuted [on the band’s website](#).

“She basically schooled us for an afternoon, just about what it is to be an indigenous musician, but also gave us her blessing on what we were doing. And that freed us up a lot and got us to dig into the track and get to where we wanted to on it,” said Bear Witness.

“It was one of those times where you get to sit down with somebody who has laid the groundwork for what we’re doing – it’s the work of Buffy and her generation that allowed us to be indigenous musicians today.

“When you sit down with somebody who has that knowledge and experience into exactly what we’re doing, to know our history, it just really strengthened us as a group.”

And while indigenous issues are emerging into the national conversation in the political realm – with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the long-overdue inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women – the arts scene is once again a step ahead.

Sainte-Marie and Tanya Tagaq were both awarded the prestigious Polaris Prize the last two years running – an award ATCR was nominated for in both 2011 and 2012. The significance of that level of recognition is not lost on the group.

#### **‘HUGE RESPONSIBILITY’**

“It’s a huge responsibility and that responsibility is doubled when you add the cultural aspects to it,” said Bear Witness. “As a young indigenous person, when you grow up without those faces that look like your own who are out there doing things like creating music, it limits what you see yourself being able to accomplish.

“And we all talk about this as a group. You know, seeing Buffy on Sesame Street when we were kids, that was massive, because there wasn’t another person on TV who looked like us, who talked about the things our parents talked about.



“So that’s the legacy we’re trying to continue now, to give that same feeling to young indigenous people now. We’re out there in the world, putting our message and our music out there, but it reflects directly to them.”

The trio recently returned from a three-week tour of Australia, another nation where a government rooted in colonialism is seeking reconciliation with its significant aboriginal population.

“It wasn’t even a translation, it was part of the narrative,” said Bear Witness. “I went into it with this idea that going to another country that went through colonization, that we would have this automatic rapport with indigenous people there, because what we went through was so similar. We talked about residential schools, the stolen generation and the similarities in the communities, but what surprised me even more was the pre-colonial connection we shared, and how strong that was. To talk about our cultures and to listen to people’s songs and see their dances and realize we’re so alike, it was making me homesick.”

Now back at home, Bear Witness is struck by the interest among everyday Canadians in indigenous culture and politics and art.

“That (level of interest) wasn’t there before,” he said. “There’s a lot of hope and that’s a huge change, that feeling of hope. For years and years we were only talking to our own community and now, everybody seems to be listening.”

A Tribe Called Red perform at the NAC Saturday with U.S. Girls, Mehdi Cayenne and The Lionyls.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ottawasun.com/2016/01/08/a-tribe-called-red-new-voice-for-canadas-indigenous-community>

## **Saskatchewan Cree artist Allen Sapp painted his Prairie childhood**

**PATRICIA DAWN ROBERTSON**

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Jan. 10, 2016 7:52PM EST

Last updated Sunday, Jan. 10, 2016 7:52PM EST

The celebrated Saskatchewan Cree painter Allen Sapp, who died on Dec. 29, parlayed an impoverished rural childhood into rich subject matter for artworks that were prized by collectors.

Mr. Sapp attracted an international following for his romantic depictions of Depression-era reserve life – thanks in part to the help of a patron in North Battleford, Sask.

Although Mr. Sapp made a good living from his art, early adversity taught him compassion. A shy man, Mr. Sapp possessed a gracious demeanour and humility that remained with him throughout his storied life.



Allen Frederick Sapp was born on Red Pheasant Reserve on Jan. 2, 1928, to parents Alex and Agnes Sapp. The legendary Cree peacemaker Chief Poundmaker (1842-1886) was also among his ancestors.

Allen was the third of seven children, four of whom (Julia, Virginia, John and Henry) died as children. Only he and his siblings Simon and Stella lived to adulthood. During Allen's childhood, Agnes, his mother, was in poor health, so he lived with her parents at Red Pheasant, about 35 kilometres south of North Battleford. His grandmother named him Kiskayetum, Cree for "he perceives it," during a grave illness because she believed Allen had a bright future to fulfill.

His parents and siblings resided at Little Pine Reserve, about 100 kilometres northwest of Red Pheasant. The distance from his immediate family, combined with his frequent childhood illnesses, left their mark on the sensitive young man.

Agnes Sapp lived in a sanitarium for most of her son's childhood. She died of tuberculosis in 1942, when Allen was 14; he contracted spinal meningitis the same year.

"Because Allen was sick, he observed children at play but he didn't have the stamina to join them," says Leah Garven, curator of the Allen Sapp Gallery, in North Battleford. "Allen was a watcher and observer. The perspective of his work is rather interesting because it's through the eyes of a child."



Stopping to Talk (1974). / Allen Sapp Gallery

Mr. Sapp experienced another form of isolation at the age of 12 when he was sent to the Onion Lake residential school. Mr. Sapp took up watercolours at the school, finding solace in imagery over words. Mr. Sapp never learned to read or write.

Mr. Sapp's maternal grandparents, Albert and Maggie Soonias, operated a cattle ranch with more than 200 head of cattle. His grandmother encouraged her young charge to draw.

“The family lived close to the land,” Ms. Garven says. “Maggie is also a central theme in his work. The Soonias were the last generation to live the old way; Sapp documented that period.”

The young artist’s interest in drawing and painting continued into adulthood. He would depict boys playing hockey and domestic scenes of his Cree grandmother picking berries or waiting for water to boil.

Mr. Sapp married Margaret Paskemin Whitford, of Little Pine Reserve, in 1955. She gave birth to their only son, David, in 1957. (David would die as a young man.)

In 1963, after the death of Mr. Sapp’s grandparents, the couple moved to North Battleford, where they rented the upper storey of a house. Mr. Sapp worked part-time at a craft store; he painted at home at night. The ambitious painter peddled his work on the street and door-to-door in an effort to make a living as an artist.

In 1966, during one of his plucky salesman cold calls, Mr. Sapp met his benefactor and lifelong friend, Allan Gonor, at the North Battleford Medical Clinic. Dr. Gonor purchased a painting from Mr. Sapp and gave him money to buy more art supplies.

The doctor recognized Mr. Sapp’s talent and encouraged him to focus on autobiographical themes in his work. Mr. Sapp’s new patron promised to buy anything he painted – until he realized the prolific Mr. Sapp was producing as many as two paintings a night. The doctor then looked for ways to expand Mr. Sapp’s audience beyond North Battleford.

He introduced Mr. Sapp to Saskatoon painter Wynona Mulcaster, who mentored the artist and hosted his first exhibition on the grounds of her home in September, 1968.

Seven months later, a collection of Mr. Sapp’s work was exhibited at Saskatoon’s prestigious Mendel Art Gallery and attracted 12,000 viewers. In 1970, Mr. Sapp had concurrent shows in London’s Alwin Gallery and in Los Angeles. He was one of the first Canadian native artists to enjoy international acclaim.

CBC broadcast the documentary *Allen Sapp, By Instinct a Painter*, in 1971, and two years later the National Film Board of Canada produced a documentary on the artist called *Colours of Pride*. The now celebrated artist from Red Pheasant Reserve was elected to the exclusive Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1975.

The couple’s son, David, died when he was about 20 years old. After David’s death, the Sapps adopted a three-year-old girl named Faye.

Mr. Sapp was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1987. His other distinctions include a Saskatchewan Award of Merit (1985), an honorary doctorate from the University of Regina (1988), a Lifetime Award for Excellence in the Arts from the

Saskatchewan Arts Board (1996) and the Governor-General's Literary Award for illustrating the children's book *The Song Within My Heart* (2003).

"Allen Sapp had good management during his 50 years in the art market," Rod Green of Masters Gallery in Calgary says. Whenever Mr. Sapp had an exhibit at his gallery, Mr. Green had clients lined up down the block.

"In his prime, Sapp had gallery representation in half a dozen cities across Canada. And he's the only artist I know [on the Prairies] with his own gallery," Mr. Green says.

The Allen Sapp Gallery opened in 1989 in North Battleford. Ruth Gonor donated 80 paintings from her late husband's collection. (Dr. Gonor died in 1985 and his wife died in 2015.) Mr. Sapp's artistic legacy was secure.

Allen Sapp Gallery curator Ms. Garven never saw the inside of Mr. Sapp's studio. "He painted at night. And he was very private with his studio space. He never let people watch him paint. Dr. Gonor filmed Mr. Sapp with a Super 8 camera in the 1960s."

The archival footage revealed that Mr. Sapp, who was self-taught, didn't do a working sketch before he painted on canvas. "He just started blotting on paint. He worked intuitively," Ms. Garven says.



Making a Rope for the Horse (1976). / Allen Sapp Gallery

Ms. Garven first handled Mr. Sapp's painting as a "grunt girl" for the 2003 travelling exhibition *Through the Eyes of the Cree and Beyond*. "I spent a lot of time packing and unpacking his paintings," Ms. Garven recalls.

"As a Prairie person, you can look at an Allen Sapp painting and tell what the temperature was that day. Because he was able to accurately reflect the light and the wind

and all of those elements into his work. When it's colourful, that means it's cold," Ms. Garven says.

"Allen Sapp had no pretense," says Marcus Miller, director of the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery at the University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon. In Mr. Miller's former position as director of galleries in North Battleford, he curated a 2010-11 Sapp exhibition titled Portraits: Painting, Face-pulling and Storytelling.

"We danced together as a group on the evening of the reception. It was a highlight for me. Knowing Allen was an enriching experience," Mr. Miller says.

Mr. Miller notes that Mr. Sapp's authentic work attracted an international fan base. "We had a world map at the entrance to the Allen Sapp Gallery. There were visitors pinned on that map from Germany, Australia ... all over the world. His work held wide appeal."

Mr. Sapp liked to sing and play his drum for gallery visitors when he was on site. His hospitality was generous and unbounded. He revelled in the company of others and loved sharing his culture and work, especially with young gallery goers.

Fittingly, Mr. Sapp's work is not the exclusive purview of museums and wealthy collectors. "Since Sapp went door-to-door selling his canvases, many North Battleford residents own an original Sapp landscape painting," Mr. Miller says.

He recalls Mr. Sapp as a compassionate and sensitive man. Echoing this sentiment is Faye Delorme, whom Mr. Sapp and his first wife adopted at the age of 3 in 1977.

"I never saw my father lose his temper," Ms. Delorme says. "He was so kind, perceptive and very generous."

If Mr. Sapp witnessed a hungry stranger wandering the grocery aisles who looked as if they couldn't afford to shop, he'd buy food for them, Ms. Delorme says. The same generous traits that made Mr. Sapp a charitable citizen were also evident in his close relationships.

In 1990, Mr. Sapp married Margaret Berryman, a white woman. Mr. Sapp was a devoted husband. His petite spouse was often spotted perched affectionately on his knee at gallery events. The couple even sipped from the same coffee cup. After his wife died in 2011, Mr. Sapp slept nightly with a photo of her on his pillow.

Suffering from heart problems, he died peacefully in his sleep last week at River Heights Lodge in North Battleford, just shy of his 88th birthday. During the last decade of his life, he continued painting despite his declining health.

Allen Sapp leaves his daughter, Ms. Delorme; brother, Simon; sister, Stella; and extended family.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/saskatchewan-cree-artist-allen-sapp-painted-his-prairie-childhood/article28101531/>

## **B.C. First Nations 'The Revenant' actor 'choked up' at DiCaprio speech**



Duane Howard arrives at the world premiere of 'The Revenant' at the TCL Chinese Theatre on Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015, in Los Angeles. (Jordan Strauss/Invision)

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The Canadian Press

Published Monday, January 11, 2016 12:05PM PST

Last Updated Monday, January 11, 2016 2:52PM PST

First Nations actor Duane Howard admits he "choked up" when "The Revenant" star Leonardo DiCaprio dedicated his Golden Globe trophy to indigenous communities around the world.

Howard and his friends were watching in Vancouver when DiCaprio took the stage on Sunday to claim the best dramatic film actor award for his role in the 19th century survival epic.

DiCaprio shared the award with "all the First Nations people represented in this film and all the indigenous communities around the world."



This photo provided by Twentieth Century Fox shows, Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from the film, 'The Revenant.'

"It is time we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them," DiCaprio said in his acceptance speech.

"It is time that we heard your voice and protected this planet for future generations."

Howard plays lead Arikara warrior Elk Dog in the drama, which was partly shot in Alberta and British Columbia and features dozens of local actors and crew members.

The 52-year-old called DiCaprio's speech "really meaningful," and said he'd like to see more meticulous portrayals of indigenous culture come out of Hollywood.

"When a Hollywood celebrity like that reaches out to the world and acknowledges us First Nations people like that, that means something," said Howard, born in the Nuuchah-nulth territory located on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

"Hollywood's got to be more open to us, as First Nations people of this land.... More and more of these films have to come out."

In "The Revenant," DiCaprio plays fur trapper Hugh Glass, who is left for dead after being attacked by a bear. Desperate to survive, he braves icy waters and an unforgiving wilderness in search of the hunting team that left him behind.

The Canadian cast also includes child actor Isaiah Tootoosis from the Poundmaker First Nation, who plays Hugh's son, and Grace Dove, as Hugh's wife.

The film's visual effects supervisor was the B.C.-based Cameron Waldbauer.

"The challenge for us really was the environment we were filming in. It was crazy," Waldbauer added in a separate interview from Vancouver, where he was preparing to begin work on the third "Maze Runner" film.

"We were in -40 C trying to make a movie and not have all the equipment freeze and people freeze and all that stuff, so it was a very difficult movie to make."

The effects whiz, who was born in New Westminster, B.C., was in charge of "practical effects" involving actual people and objects. That involved building a large rig with a mechanical horse to simulate a man and horse falling off a cliff.

"It's an actual guy and a mechanical horse we had on a track," he said of the spectacular shot.

"The beginning of that shot is basically real. And then he goes down into the tree and then the visual effects take over."

Waldbauer said director Alejandro Inarritu was a stickler for detail, and that went far beyond visual effects details.

"They had the elders of the local tribe where we were, they were involved, they made sure that they were as accurate as they could be with everything the (actors) were wearing, how they acted, what they did and the difference between the tribes," he said.

"A lot of times, everyone, directors included, will just kind of gloss over the small details just to hurry up and tell the story. But Alejandro wasn't interested in that. He just wanted it to be as real as it could possibly be."

**Direct Link:** <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-first-nations-the-revenant-actor-choked-up-at-dicaprio-speech-1.2732586>

## **Young aboriginal musicians pay tribute to poet Rita Joe at the NAC**

**The Rita Joe National Song Project challenged indigenous youth to create new works inspired by Rita Joe poem**

By Sandra Abma, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 13, 2016 7:43 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 14, 2016 7:25 AM ET



Voices clear and strong, voices raised in harmony and defiance.

In *Gentle Warrior*, a brand new song created by the students and teachers of Allison Bernard Memorial High School, in Eskasoni First Nation, young Mi'kmaq musicians dance and sing about their determination to reclaim their culture.



These students are taking part in the National Arts Centre's Rita Joe Project, a nationwide challenge to aboriginal youth to make new music based on *I Lost My Talk*, a poem Joe wrote about her childhood pain of being forbidden to speak her own language in Residential school.

The children she knew lost their "talk" — forbidden to speak the language of their parents and grandparents in the residential schools they were forced to attend. Joe's poem is about the loss of identity, but also a call to regain the culture and share it:

*I lost my talk  
The talk you took away.  
When I was a little girl  
At Shubenacadie school.  
You snatched it away:  
I speak like you  
I think like you  
I create like you  
The scrambled ballad, about my word.*

*Two ways I talk  
Both ways I say,  
Your way is more powerful.*

*So gently I offer my hand and ask,  
Let me find my talk  
So I can teach you about me.*

The NAC arranged for guest artists to conduct songwriting workshops with students in Maniwaki, Que., Norway House in Manitoba, Edmonton, Iqaluit and Eskasoni, Nova Scotia.

Eskasoni is Rita Joe's hometown, so young musicians such as Kalolin Johnson, the featured singer in *Gentle Warrior* was already schooled in the poet's legacy.

Johnson says she learned about the courage to express herself from lessons about Joe.



The students are here in Ottawa to present their music in a live performance.

Rita Joe's youngest daughter Anne is here as well. She says her mother would have been overjoyed to see her work still resonates with young people.

"She loved children. She loved connecting with children. When she was well she would travel to schools and read her poems to them. She would love it that they are inspired by her work and making something new of it," said Joe.

Today, the students who attend Allison Bernard Memorial High School in Eskasoni First Nation, Nova Scotia, are able to take courses in Mi'kmaq Language and Mi'kmaq Culture, and they say there is pride and hope for the future of their culture.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/aboriginal-rita-joe-project-national-arts-centre-1.3402559>

## Aboriginal Business & Finance

### **Barbara Yaffe: Ignore First Nations at your peril, says chief**

BY BARBARA YAFFE, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 7, 2016



Chief Shane Gottfriedson is the regional chief for B.C. on the Assembly of First Nations.

B.C.'s Assembly of First Nations regional chief delivered a bold message recently to the province's business community, asserting aboriginals want not just to partner economically with resource developers, but to own the companies overseeing those developments.

"Our longer-term goal is to own those companies," Chief Shane Gottfriedson told 400 business people attending a conference sponsored by the Business Council of B.C. "We want to own those major projects. We are getting beyond being mom-and-pop, band council operations."

Gottfriedson was elected to his position last June, replacing Jody Wilson-Raybould, now the Liberal MP for Vancouver-Granville and federal minister of justice.

Gottfriedson served notice to the business crowd that the rules of the game have changed.

"We're open-minded. We're business-minded. We are looking at creating a better future for our communities. We are the poorest of the poor, the most disadvantaged. Everybody's got to win in this process."

In a riveting address, the former chief of the Tk'emlups Indian Band in Kamloops lamented that aboriginals have become experts at "managing poverty". Now, he says, they "need to become good at managing wealth.

"We can run any facet of every project, up to high-level management and bookkeeping. We don't want to be the ones on the highway holding up the traffic signs, or running first aid projects."

Gottfriedson's message is timely. Aboriginal territory in B.C. is being defined more broadly with every new court ruling.

Local companies aspiring to advance a resource project these days now have an impossible hill to climb if aboriginal groups are not onside.

Gottfriedson says it is important for resource project sponsors to get to know the aboriginal communities involved, and fully respect their traditional customs.

Indigenous people are not about to relinquish their “four-season fishing, hunting and trapping activities”. Things like migratory bird patterns and clean watersheds are fundamental.

The chief acknowledged that some aboriginals broadly oppose resource development and need to be educated about the value of partnering with resource companies.

“Education for our people is our great white buffalo, our key to success.”

His audience expressed concern about potential delays flowing from any opposition, delays that could doom projects such as those related to LNG.

Some of Gottfriedson’s comments came during a panel discussion in which the chief sat beside representatives of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and Stantec, a professional services company. He remarked that he felt “like the middle layer of a moose meat sandwich”.

Nonetheless, he had no trouble conveying his views.

“For too long we’ve been left out of the game. If you partner with First Nations, we can be the best partner you’ll ever have. If you don’t want to work with us, we can be your worst enemy as well.”

He told the crowd not to be fearful. “Just go in with a business approach, talk about a win, and be respectful in your dialogue.

“Remember, we are all human beings, and we all like to make money.”

Brian Lee Crowley, from the Ontario-based Macdonald-Laurier Institute, said the way to advance resource projects is to have all parties agree on a general operating framework, with accepted ground rules. Those ground rules can thereafter serve as precedents.

“We need to stop focusing on the individual projects.”

Certainly, that modus operandi has not always yielded positive results.

The Northern Gateway project, now assumed dead following a federal Liberal plan to ban tanker traffic along the northern B.C. coast, is likely to become a poster child for projects doomed by aboriginal opposition.

Enbridge engaged with aboriginals along the coast far too late in the process. Never having had a chance to help shape the project, they rejected Northern Gateway outright.

Based on the Enbridge experience, and paying heed to myriad court rulings that have upheld aboriginal land rights in this province, Gottfriedson's counsel is to be ignored at the peril of any company doing business in B.C.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/barbara+yaffe+ignore+first+nations+your+peril+says/11637418/story.html>

## **Don't force First Nations members to wait for financial accountability**

**TODD MACKAY**

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jan. 08, 2016 11:14AM EST

Last updated Friday, Jan. 08, 2016 11:15AM EST

*Todd MacKay is Prairie director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation*

Charmaine Stick takes care of six kids. She also reads financial documents to keep an eye on her local government because "what else would she do at home all day?" But she can't find out how much her band chief is paid. Her chief cites treaty rights as a reason to avoid transparency, but she says accountability to the community is an essential part of First Nations culture.

Ms. Stick lives on Onion Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan. More than 93 per cent of Canadian First Nations have complied with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA) and disclosed basic financial information such as the salaries of chiefs and councils. Onion Lake refused to provide this transparency and fought the government in court. Now, Ms. Stick may have a longer wait for answers because of a recent decision made by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett.

"In keeping with our commitment to a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship, the government of Canada will suspend any court actions against First Nations who have not complied with the act," Ms. Bennett said in a written statement. She went on to add that "transparency and accountability are paramount to any government, whether it is municipal, provincial, federal or First Nation."

The legislation allows the government to withhold non-essential funding from unaccountable bands, but Ms. Bennett is now giving up that enforcement mechanism. Ms. Bennett buried her statement on a Friday afternoon before Christmas to avoid tough questions from reporters, for good reason.

The Globe and Mail defined the issue early. "The FNFTA is essential for responsible government," its editorial board wrote last Aug. 19. "The governed always need to know what the governors are up to."

“It is a critical and overdue measure of accountability: in common with other politicians in Canada, aboriginal chiefs cannot properly be accountable to the people they represent if their finances are not open to scrutiny,” echoed the National Post editorial pages on Sept. 2.

“The Liberals came to power promising more open, transparent governance,” concluded the Toronto Star’s editorial on Dec. 21. “That should go for Ottawa and First Nations alike. No exceptions.”

Canada’s media stalwarts are not the only sources of support for First Nations accountability.

“Transparency is a logical idea,” wrote First Nations author Richard Wagamese in First Nations Drum. “Why not show Canadians how well we can manage our own affairs?” There are, of course, those opposed to the legislation.

“First Nations fully support accountability but Bill C-27 [FNFTA] is a flawed piece of legislation that does not respect our rights and must be repealed,” said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde. “[Minister Bennett’s] announcement gives us an opportunity to work together on a better approach where First Nations are accountable to their citizens first.”

Others have a more blunt opinion.

“It’s always about this discrimination and sorry to say, for me it’s racism,” said Chief Wallace Fox of Onion Lake. “It’s discriminatory legislation because no other race is subject to this legislation in Canada except Indian people.”

Chief Fox ignores the simple fact that the need for accountability is universal and elected leaders around the world publish their salaries.

Here’s the simple reality: Ms. Stick doesn’t know how much Chief Fox is getting paid. She is, however, well aware that the average income for people living in Onion Lake is \$17,528. Accountable government is critical to improving life for Ms. Stick and her family.

As the minister responsible, Ms. Bennett has access to answers that are hidden from Ms. Stick. Notwithstanding Ms. Bennett’s commitment to an improved nation-to-nation relationship, she cannot keep those answers hidden forever. Ms. Stick must not be left waiting in the dark.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/dont-force-first-nations-members-to-wait-for-financial-accountability/article28074911/>

## **First Nations should have never suffered funding freeze: Chief Madahbee**

By **Tom Sasvari** -  
Jan 8, 2016

MANITOULIN—Although he is pleased that the Canadian government is reinstating funds (which had been frozen under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act), as announced by Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, Anishinabek grand council Chief Patrick Madahbee said the freeze should never have been put in place initially by the previous government.

*“What happened is that clearly this was a situation in which the (Stephen) Harper government had been under pressure from groups like the Canadian Taxpayers Association (CPA), on where government funds were going and why the government was in a huge deficit situation,” said Chief Madahbee. “So the government was looking for a target where cuts or a freeze in funds could be handed out, and they pointed to First Nation chiefs as not being accountable for funds in their communities.”*

However, “First Nations finances have to be done on a regular basis by a reputable auditing firm,” stated Chief Madahbee. “If not, a third party from Indian Affairs is brought in.”

“This whole thing has been a public relations excuse on the part of the federal government, to cause a diversion and focus on First Nations when the government itself was going further into debt,” continued Chief Madahbee. “And this Act was forced through legislation, and funding was held back to First Nations, even on essential needs in our communities.”

Chief Madahbee pointed out some First Nations such as Onion Lake (Saskatchewan) had taken the federal government to court over this Act, “and they beat the government in court, that this act was unnecessary. Again, as I’ve stated previously, across the country, less than six percent of First Nations communities were found to have a bad audit. Meanwhile, the federal government is billions in deficit, and saying First Nations with small budgets are not being accountable?”

“It was politics, and a diversionary tactic,” continued Chief Madahbee. “Some of our communities have been saying they need funds for things such as education and clean water—with 144 communities still under a boil water advisory. The government cut back all First Nations and those doing advocacy work, as much as 60 percent in some cases.”

“This has been a totally unnecessary situation,” stated Chief Madahbee. “If anyone is under a larger microscope and scrutiny than First Nations I don’t know who that would be. Every member of a First Nation community gets a chance to see the community audit, and the audits are presented and made public at open band council meetings.”

Along with cancelling the freeze on funds to First Nations, Ms. Bennett also announced the government is halting compliance measures that required bands to post detailed financial information online.



In a news release issued by the government on December 18, the minister said the government will suspend court actions against First Nations that have not complied with the act.

“We will work in full partnership with First Nations leaders and organizations on the way forward to improve accountability and transparency,” Ms. Bennett said in the statement. “This can not be achieved without the engagement of First Nations and its members.”

Forty-three First Nations were waiting on the Liberal government to release more than \$12 million in funding, which was held back by the previous conservative government.

The First Nations Financial Transparency Act brought in by the Conservatives, required 581 bands across Canada to release their financial information or have their government funding ceased.

Ms. Bennett said in her release that initial steps will lead the way to discussions on transparency and accountability that are “based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership and that build towards a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples.”

*“I would assume the funding will be reinstated immediately,” said Chief Madahbee, pointing out, “the government is reviewing all policy and acts passed by Mr. Harper and his government. It was Mr. Harper’s government that lost over 170 court cases involving First Nations.”*

“When you are wrong, you are freaking wrong as was the case here with the government,” stated Chief Madahbee. “Everyone should be questioning for instance why the federal government stupidly spent what is in the neighbourhood of \$190 million on court cases to fight First Nations on these type of issues.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.manitoulin.ca/2016/01/08/first-nations-should-have-never-suffered-funding-freeze-chief-madahbee/>

## **Editorial: Reinstate transparency act governing First Nations councils**

VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 13, 2016



Barbara Cote was named chief of the Shuswap First Nation in 2014 after her predecessor Paul Sam was discredited and ousted when his family's earnings were revealed.

The Trudeau government's suspension last month of a law forcing aboriginal chiefs and band councils to fess up about their spending reflects a big step backward for democratic accountability on reserves.

The Liberal action kneecaps the Financial Transparency Act, enacted in March 2013 by Stephen Harper's Conservatives.

The law required 581 First Nations to submit annual audited financial statements and salary information of the chief and council to Ottawa. The information was then posted on the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs website.

It proved extremely effective, providing information to the governed about their governors and government, information they otherwise would never have had. Information that proves particularly useful come voting time.

It is not as though this law singled out aboriginals for special scrutiny. Non-aboriginals enjoy access to such budgetary information through public accounts documents, auditors-general reports, and data regularly posted on parliamentary websites.

As it turned out, the Financial Transparency Act turned up some stratospheric salary numbers for several chiefs across the country, with some becoming discredited and ousted as a result, while others were able to survive after justifying their pay levels to their constituents.

Which is the way democracy generally works.

But on Dec. 18, federal Liberals served notice they were halting compliance measures related to the act, reinstating any funding withheld under the act, and suspending any court actions against those who did not comply with the legislation.

The action was part of an effort by Trudeau's team to reset the federal relationship with aboriginals, often prickly during the previous Conservative era. Some had criticized the transparency act as undermining First Nations accountability by prioritizing federal paternalism.

Few would argue that it would have been far better for all involved had the aboriginal leaders undertaken on their own to fully disclose their bands' spending practices. But that was not the norm. The result was that band members were being denied the governance accountability that has long been accepted as the norm for their non-aboriginal peers.

The Liberal government, in power less than three months, seems intent on taking a meat cleaver to all manner of Conservative legislation, and that is their right given their majority status.

But, while voters opted last October to toss the Conservatives, in so doing they were not rejecting all the Harper government's actions.

The Financial Transparency Act was long overdue and remains essential in the absence of a decision by chiefs and councils to undertake voluntary budgetary disclosure.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.vancouversun.com/opinion/editorials/editorial+reinstate+transparency+governing+first/11650124/story.html>

## **Business, government and First Nations leaders gather for economic prosperity forum**

By [Brandon Gonez](#) Reporter Global News, January 13, 2016 3:54 pm



The two-day conference, which began Wednesday, brought together members of all three levels of government and First Nations leaders.

REGINA – Over 100 attendees are gathering at the Double Tree Hotel in Regina for a prosperity conference by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN).

The two-day conference, which began Wednesday, brought together members of all three levels of government and First Nations leaders.

They're focusing on exploring more ways to create economic opportunities for all residents of Saskatchewan.

"It's also a learning opportunity for government and industry to come and sit with us and just really learn about technical and practical information of how to work together and build this province and country together," said FSIN vice-chief Robert Merasty.

This is the second edition of the conference. The third and final forum will be held in Saskatoon in March.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2452315/business-government-and-first-nations-leaders-gather-for-economic-prosperity-forum/>

## Aboriginal Community Development

### **Parks Canada still might privatize mountain hot springs**

**Unclear whether plan is shelved or still in the works for Banff, Radium and Jasper**

By Kyle Bakx, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 11, 2016 3:00 AM MT Last Updated: Jan 11, 2016 5:29 PM MT



The Banff Upper Hot Springs, Radium Hot Springs and Miette Hot Springs in Jasper, Alta., were all supposed to be privatized, but there have been delays. (CBC)

Workers at three mountain hot springs remain in limbo four years after Parks Canada announced it wanted to privatize the tourist attractions in Alberta and B.C.

The initial announcement caused an uproar with local communities and First Nations, and [protests](#) and [heated town hall](#) meetings soon followed. Concerns include the impact on admission prices and whether the sites could be turned into private spas.

Parks would still own the facilities but would contract out the business operations at the Banff, Radium and Miette Hot Springs in Jasper.

The 2012 decision by Parks Canada put employees at the three sites in a perilous employment situation as they have a notification of affected status, which means the operations of the hot springs could face commercialization in the future.

"We, the union, don't like that," said Kevin King with the Union of National Employees. "Employees of any organization, whether they are publicly funded or private sector, would prefer to have some certainty."



## **First Nations consider hot springs on their lands**

Parks Canada did announce a delay in the process in 2013 because it needed time to consult with First Nations. There are 20 First Nations who consider the three hot springs to be on their lands. First Nations people considered the hot springs to be sacred places more than a century ago.

For instance, the Shuswap Band has a long history of using the Radium Hot Springs long before the site was ever developed.

"That was a healing site, that was a spiritual site to our nation," said Audrey Eugene, the band's culture and heritage coordinator. So far, Parks Canada has not talked to the band about privatizing the site.

"Our Shuswap Nation used that trail a lot to trade with the prairie people because the prairie people had the buffalo and stuff and we had the salmon. It's just a major trail that was used, so all we want is to be consulted with anything to do with Parks Canada," she said.

While Parks Canada declined an interview, spokeswoman Kassandra Dazé said in a statement the "examination of the matter is on-going, including through discussions with First Nation partners."

## **Union hopes Liberals will give more money to Parks**

The union is hopeful a change of government in Ottawa will result in a new narrative and position on the privatization plan after the Liberals ran on a platform to "reverse Stephen Harper's cuts to Parks Canada, which cut more than \$25 million from programs and services."

Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna declined an interview request.

"We are aware that Parks Canada is examining the matter of the hot pools in the mountain parks and expect that officials will brief the minister in due course," her spokeswoman, Caitlin Workman, said in an email.



There are 20 First Nations who consider the three hot springs to be on their lands. (CBC)

## **Some support privatization**

Not everyone is opposed to commercializing the hot springs, with some optimistic that it could improve the visitor experience.

"If something can be run more efficiently than it has in the past that would be a benefit to our mountain park users," said Casey Pierce with the Association for Mountain Parks Protection & Enjoyment.

Pierce questions whether Parks Canada should be running hot pools, considering the organization's mandate includes culture, ecological integrity, conservation and education.

"No wonder they were looking at options," she said.

The first government facility at the Upper Hot Springs in Banff, on the site of today's Rimrock Resort, was constructed in 1904. A decade later, a concrete bathing pool, log bathhouse and a small store were built at the Radium Hot Springs. In Jasper, the Miette Hot Springs were largely developed in the 1930s as part of a depression unemployment relief project.



**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/parks-canada-radium-banff-jasper-miette-private-union-1.3394486>

## Vancouver Park Board adopts 11 First Nations strategies

by Craig Takeuchi on January 12th, 2016 at 6:21 PM



The Vancouver Park Board tweeted this image on January 11 to announce the adoption of 11 Truth and Reconciliation recommendations. VANCOUVER PARK BOARD

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation announced on January 12 that it has approved 11 strategies for its programs and facilities in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report published last year.

The strategies include themes identified by the commission such as language and culture, professional development and training for public servants, education for reconciliation, youth programs, sports, and commemoration.

The board promises to increase public awareness and support for aboriginal participants in their programs, particularly for children, youth, and elders.

More specifically, the park board will create a program for aboriginal and nonaboriginal artists to collaborate on works related to reconciliation themes.

The board also promises to consider aboriginal rights when granting permits for special events and sport hosting to ensure First Nations territorial protocols are respected. Archaeological and aboriginal protocols will also be respected for any invasive investigations, inspections, or soil disturbances of cemeteries or midden lands.

Park board chair Sarah Kirby-Yung stated in a news release that the board has become the first Canadian municipal government body to adopt recommendations in response to the TRC's 94 calls to action.



On June 29, the Urban Aboriginal Committee asked the park board to review the TRC calls to action. On July 20, the park board asked staff to report back with recommendations based on the TRC report.

Meanwhile, on June 23, Vancouver city council asked staff to provide recommendations based on the TRC report. Staff will be reporting back to council on January 18.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/news/614646/vancouver-park-board-adopts-11-first-nations-strategies>

## **Indigenous Affairs minister resists calls to discuss Manitoba reserve resettlement**

**GLORIA GALLOWAY**

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016 7:32PM EST

Last updated Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016 9:21PM EST

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says allegations of “inappropriate behaviour” by officials in her department who are resettling the evacuees of a flooded Manitoba reserve should be handled first by the department itself.

Adrian Sinclair, the chief of Lake St. Martin First Nation, has written to Ms. Bennett to say that actions taken by Indigenous Affairs bureaucrats while the Conservatives were in power have created an unjust situation for his people.

Lake St. Martin, he wrote, is “being pressured to enter into unconscionable agreements which are contrary to our best interests” as construction of a new multimillion-dollar community to house the evacuees continues. Mr. Sinclair urged Ms. Bennett to order an investigation and to meet with him and his council to “discuss this whole scandalous situation.”

But the minister says Indigenous Affairs bureaucrats must look into the allegations before she gets involved.

“My department has a process in place to ensure allegations and complaints are examined properly and that appropriate action is taken if necessary,” Ms. Bennett said in an e-mail on Tuesday. “Individuals with allegations and/or complaints are encouraged to use the department’s allegations and complaints process.”

The minister is also refusing Mr. Sinclair’s request that she call a halt to meetings between her staff and the bureaucrats to discuss the reserve’s relocation until the investigation has been completed. Ms Bennett said she relies “on departmental officials to provide me with advice on files as they have valuable information and history on the many issues of the department.”

Lake St. Martin was deliberately flooded in May, 2011, by the Manitoba government to spare Winnipeg from the ravages of a historically high spring runoff, forcing an evacuation of the reserve's 1,600 residents. The land was supersaturated and declared uninhabitable, and the evacuees, many of whom are still living in Winnipeg hotels, have been unable to return home.

Construction of a new community of Lake St. Martin, which is expected to cost \$250-million, began last spring on a site purchased by the Manitoba government. It is adjacent to the old reserve and it, too, is saturated with water. First Nation members describe it as a swamp.

In the months after the evacuation, Mr. Sinclair and his council chose lands that are high and dry as their preferred place for a new community.

But the province and the federal government, which is responsible for the location of reserves, did not accept that site. And, after two years of failed negotiations, the First Nation council passed a resolution agreeing to relocate to property purchased by Manitoba.

In her e-mail, Ms. Bennett said thousands of Manitoba evacuees have been without a home for far too long.

"I am resolved to ensure that all First Nation evacuees displaced by 2011 flooding are able to return to safe and suitable accommodations," she said. "To that end, my department has been engaging and will continue to engage with the leadership of concerned communities, including Lake St. Martin."

Charlie Angus, the NDP critic for indigenous affairs, said it is important to remember that the people of Lake St. Martin have had their lives disrupted since 2011 and to ensure that their resettlement is done properly.

"I think it's reasonable for the new government to do some due diligence here," said Mr. Angus. "It's better to be safe than sorry. If there's a problem with this site, if there's a problem with the deal, let's find out now before we spend hundreds of millions of dollars moving this community to a place that they didn't want to be settled."

Kevin Hart, the regional chief for Manitoba for the Assembly of First Nations, said his top priority is to get the evacuees home.

"We have elders who are passing away that can't be buried back home. We have instances of violence occurring because of them being in the city," said Mr. Hart. And "it is very concerning and alarming for me to hear about the people who are starting to commit suicide because of the displacement and the loss of hope."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/indigenous-affairs-ministry-should-handle-inquiry-of-manitoba-reserve-resettlement-bennett/article28137909/>

## City takes step toward cultural sensitivity

Awareness training session for staff

JOHN CAIRNS , STAFF REPORTER / BATTLEFORDS NEWS-OPTIMIST  
JANUARY 14, 2016 06:50 AM



Councillor Ray Fox speaks at council Monday on the City's efforts towards greater understanding of the issues of Aboriginal people in the city. Photo by John Cairns

Getting a better understanding of aboriginal culture was a key topic at North Battleford city council Monday.

A couple of items on the agenda were focused on that topic. One is word the City has hired Straight Talk Aboriginal Awareness Training out of Saskatoon to make a two-hour presentation to City staff Jan. 26 at Don Ross Centre.

The training is developed from an aboriginal perspective and is normally a five-part series designed for anyone interested in aboriginal issues in western Canada. For this presentation there will be a history on treaties, the Métis, the Indian Act and residential schools, some cultural protocol and current initiatives that are helping change the community.

Director of Leisure Services Bill Samborski explained to reporters this presentation would provide bit of background into aboriginal issues and how that background affects their daily work.

The goal, he indicated, was to improve their service delivery.

“The hope is it will be a little bit more understanding and awareness and allow things to flow a little bit easier when we’re working with the different cultures,” said Samborski.

The other item discussed was the opening of the Walking With Our Sisters commemorative art installation, which runs at Chapel Gallery Jan. 15 to Feb. 7. The installation features more than 1,750 moccasin vamps that represent the unfinished lives of the women whose lives were cut short.

While it officially opens Friday, the public will be able to see the exhibit starting Thursday between 7- and 9 p.m. Other events are planned for Thursday, including a media tour and a feast in the afternoon.

Hours of operation for the exhibit will be between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily, Tuesday through Sunday. The main entrance will be door no. 2 of the Chapel Gallery, to the right of the main entrance, however the main entrance will still be available for Elders and those who are handicapped.

The grand opening culminates months of planning and several events held in the lead up to the exhibition.

Samborski also noted volunteers were still needed and those interested are encouraged to call the Chapel Gallery at 306-445-1757.

“This is an extremely significant event in our community,” said Samborski of the installation.

Councillor Ray Fox welcomed the efforts by the City towards greater understanding of aboriginal issues in his remarks at council.

“It’s a good direction to go, especially with what has been happening very recently with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and their recommendations,” said Fox.

“I believe that we’re in a time of change, I think we’re turning slowly a few corners. And I believe that that’s directly related to understanding. I believe that, and I’ve always said, we’re here together, we’re here as a community, we’re here as a society and we have to learn about each other. And for the most part the learning has been ‘one way.’ And I believe now that we’re embracing the opportunity to not only teach, but to learn from one another.”

Fox also welcomed the Walking With Our Sisters exhibition and spoke further about the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and North Battleford’s leadership role on the issue.

He spoke of the North Battleford-backed resolution passed at SUMA last year that called for an inquiry or roundtable on the issue and said, “we were successful” in accomplishing what they wanted.

“Now it has gone to the next level, which had to happen, and I think we played a role in that.”

Councillor Ray Fox speaks at council Monday on the City’s efforts towards greater understanding of the issues of Aboriginal people in the city. Photo by John Cairns

- See more at: <http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/city-takes-step-toward-cultural-sensitivity-1.2150379#sthash.5mX5TLcM.dpuf>

## Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

### First Nations leader calls Thunder Bay, Ont., jail 'deplorable'

**NAN Grand Chief concerned about conditions in jail for inmates, many of whom are First Nations**

CBC News Posted: Jan 08, 2016 4:09 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 08, 2016 4:09 PM ET



Four people were injured when a guard was taken hostage at the Thunder Bay District Jail in December. (Jody Porter/CBC)

A First Nations leader in northern Ontario is raising the alarm about conditions in the Thunder Bay district jail.

**A guard was taken hostage at the facility in December**, and several inmates were also injured in the incident.

Alvin Fiddler, the grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, toured the facility earlier this week because he wanted to see first hand some of the concerns he'd been hearing from First Nations people locked up there.

"It's not a happy place. None of us want our relatives to be there," he said.



Alvin Fiddler, Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aki Nation, toured the Thunder Bay district jail earlier this week. (Alvin Fiddler)

First Nations people make up the majority of those in custody in Thunder Bay and are going without essential services, like daily access to showers, he said.

"I would describe it as deplorable, the conditions there and I think just the current state of how it's being operated is a concern," said Fiddler.

First Nations inmates are also being denied access to traditional spiritual ceremonies, he said.

"I think the corrections system needs to do more to ensure they [inmates] have access to our culture, our ceremonies and to ensure there are facilities for them to have access to elders," said Fiddler.

Fiddler would not comment on the labour dispute between correctional workers and the Ontario government.

Thousands of guards could walk off the job this weekend.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-leader-calls-thunder-bay-ont-jail-deplorable-1.3396141>

# Aboriginal jail inmate says no time offered for smudging ceremony

BY MATT DAY, OTTAWA SUN

FIRST POSTED: SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016 07:04 PM EST |

UPDATED: SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016 07:13 PM EST

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Before the First Nation's Culture Day at Spruce Haven Park in Melfort, Sask. got under way on Thursday, September 29, 2011 individuals had an opportunity to take part in a traditional smudging ceremony.

MICHAEL OLEKSYN/Postmedia file photo

An aboriginal criminal defence lawyer says jails that don't give native inmates time for traditional healing techniques and other cultural customs are committing a human rights violation.

Frank Horn said he regularly receives calls from inmates at Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre concerned with their inability to smudge, a ceremony involving the burning of herbs for emotional and spiritual purification.

"Aboriginals across Canada have lived this kind of lifestyle for hundreds of years and it's so easily taken away from them on the inside," he said. "It hurts them. It helps a lot of the guys who have come from isolated communities to bond with the other inmates inside and get them through the hard times."

Innes Rd. jail inmate James Picody, facing assault charges, said that between Oct. 26 and Dec. 22 he wasn't allowed time for smudging.

In a letter to the Sun, he wrote that "every other culture gets to practice and learn about they're (sic) religion. How is this fair?"

Ministry spokesman Brent Ross said all programming, including those dedicated to aboriginal inmates, is deemed essential in breaking the cycle of reoffending.



"Programming, including smudging, was available and continues to be available at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. That being said, there are times when a lockdown may occur at any institution, which could affect the ability to provide programming," he said. "When a lockdown does occur, partial or individual unit lockdowns are always preferred to a facility lockdown and every effort is made to maintain the regular schedule of visits, programming and other services."

Picody provided a detailed, pencil-written chart showing that lockdowns or partial lockdowns that took place 47 out of a period of 57 days.

The Ministry of Correctional Services and Community Safety did not confirm those numbers.

Instead, it sent information on lockdowns from January to October. During that time, there were 59 partial lockdowns and 52 full lockdowns. The ministry information didn't include details on the duration of each lockdown.

Wendiiosta Horn-Allmand, a former native liaison officer with the Odawa Native Friendship Centre, a non-profit organization providing services to Ottawa's aboriginal community, said she used to field calls daily from inmates saying they weren't given time to smudge. She said time should be offered daily and at minimum once a week.

Ross said out of the 4,200 people admitted into OCDC in 2014-15, 634 were aboriginal. That ratio is comparable to the provincewide numbers the ministry provided where 7,394 out of 58,778 admissions were aboriginal.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ottawasun.com/2016/01/10/aboriginal-jail-inmate-says-no-time-offered-for-smudging-ceremony>

## **First Nations student deaths inquest: Build schools on reserve, parents say**

**Parents of Jordan Wabasse say they won't allow other sons to come to city for high school**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 12, 2016 6:30 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 12, 2016 6:30 AM ET



The inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students began in October 2015 and is expected to wrap up at the end of March 2016. (CBC)

The parents of a First Nations teenager who died in Thunder Bay, Ont., say they won't allow any of their other children to leave home for high school, despite the lack of opportunities at home in Webequie First Nation.



Jordan Wabasse, 15, from Webequie First Nation died while attending school in Thunder Bay in 2011. (CBC)

Bernice and Derek Jacob testified on Monday at an inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay, including their son Jordan Wabasse, 15, who died in 2011.

All of the students are from remote First Nations in northern Ontario where formal classroom education doesn't go beyond Grade 10.

Wabasse "had more options in Thunder Bay," Bernice Jacob told the inquest about her decision to let her son move 600 kilometres south to the city. "He was anxious to come, he wanted to try a hockey league."

There is only an outdoor rink, shoveled by hand, in the remote community, and Wabasse loved hockey, she said. He played net for the Current River Comets after he moved to Thunder Bay.

His teammates were among those who helped search for Wabasse after he disappeared on February 7, 2011. His body was found in the Kaministiquia River on May 10, 2011.

There has been little evidence about how he came to be in the water.

## **'I won't allow it'**

Jacob said her 17-year-old son Devon is trying to complete high school in Webequie, but it is challenging because so few courses are offered in the community of about 800 people.

Will Devon come to school in Thunder Bay?" Jacob's lawyer, Christa Big Canoe, asked her at the inquest.

"No, I won't allow it...because of the loss of Jordan," she said.

Currently no students are being sent from Webequie First Nation to Thunder Bay for high school, Derek Jacob told jurors. Jacob is an education counsellor in the First Nation.

When asked how best to keep First Nations students safe in Thunder Bay without their parents, Derek Jacob didn't answer directly.

"You'd probably have to have high schools in the reserves," Derek Jacob said. "And to have better facilities too."

Jacob said there are about 50 high school students in Webequie and one high school teacher. After Grade 9, they take distance education courses in portables that are "falling apart," he said.

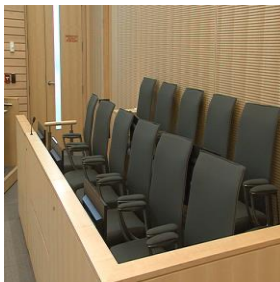
He admitted not allowing Jordan's three brothers to attend high school in the city may limit their opportunities.

Watch live streaming **[video from the First Nation student deaths inquest here](#)**.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-build-schools-on-reserve-parents-say-1.3399320>

## **Aboriginal man accused of murder loses court action to allow criminals on Alberta juries**

National News | January 11, 2016 by Kenneth Jackson |



**Kenneth Jackson**  
**APTN National News**

Jeremy Newborn's mother looked at the potential jurors in her son's murder trial and something jumped out to her.

None of them appeared to be Aboriginal like her son.

The second-degree murder trial grinded to a halt, just days before beginning in October 2014.

Newborn's lawyer wanted to challenge Alberta's jury selection process.

The argument: Alberta laws do not allow people convicted of a crime to be on a jury – and because Alberta, like many western provinces, has a high rate of Aboriginal people incarcerated, the law was unconstitutional to Newborn expecting a jury of his peers.

Last week, an Alberta judge shot down that argument.

“In my view, even after such closer scrutiny, the exclusion of persons who have committed crimes is properly seen as reasonable and acceptable,” wrote Justice Brian Burrows in his Jan. 7 decision.

Burrows said someone convicted of a crime is likely not going to be impartial.

“The disproportionate effect of the impugned exclusion in the case of Indigenous Canadians points to a shameful feature of modern Canadian society, but it does not cause a jury selected through the application of that exclusion to be unrepresentative; rather, it serves to promote the impartiality of such a jury,” he said.

Newborn has pleaded not guilty to the December 2012 murder of John Hollar.

His trial is expected to proceed in April.

In 2013-14, Aboriginal offenders represented 21 per cent of the total prison population while Aboriginal adults represent three per cent of the Canadian adult population according to the latest federal government statistics.

The constitutional challenge was argued in an Edmonton court in December.

The Crown argued allowing convicted criminals on juries would weaken the public's confidence.

Alberta is not the only province with such a law, eight others have the same rule.

During the court challenge, Newborn called an expert in statistics and sociology.

Jaqueline Quinless testified a random selection of 178 people, which was the number of people selected for Newborn's jury array, nine would be expected to be Aboriginal based on Edmonton's population.

But there wasn't any Aboriginal people of the 178 selected in October 2014.

Quinless said that could be a result of the effects of colonialism, such as residential schools that the Supreme Court has ruled, twice, is a direct link to the higher number of Aboriginal people incarcerated in Canada.

"(These factors) have also damaged the relationship between Indigenous Canadians and the court system and have resulted in a reluctance on the part of Indigenous Canadians to participate in it as members of juries," said Burrows summarizing Quinless' testimony in his decision.

The full decision can be read [here](#).

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/11/aboriginal-man-accused-of-murder-loses-court-action-to-allow-criminals-on-alberta-juries/>

## **Investigation Into Alleged Police Abuse of Indigenous Women in Quebec Under Way**

Cara McKenna

1/12/16

An investigation is underway into allegations of sexual and physical violence towards indigenous women by police in Quebec.

The claims about Val-d'Or provincial police were exposed last year in a [Radio-Canada](#) report and involve indigenous women who said they were either forced or paid in cash or drugs to perform sex acts on uniformed male officers.

The alleged victims said that officers in the town northwest of Montreal routinely drove seemingly intoxicated women out of town and left them to walk home in the cold. One woman said an officer physically assaulted her in his police cruiser and left her alone on the highway after she refused to engage in sexual activity with him.

Bianca Moushoun told CBC that as recently as two years ago, officers paid her in cash or drugs to perform sex acts on them.

"We went to a road in the woods, and that's where they would ask me to perform fellatio," she said. "Sometimes they paid me in coke. Sometimes they paid me in cash, sometimes both."

Carole Marcil, a Val d'Or bartender, alleged that as many as 30 women have had similar encounters and "show up with bumps, bruises, punches and burns." It is not a force-wide problem but that there are several "bad apples" within it, she said.

At a news conference following the investigation's late October release, Surete du Quebec Capt. Guy Lapointe said the 14 allegations date back a 10 years and that two involve sexual misconduct. Two other sexual assault allegations were made against a ninth officer, who is now dead, he said. Lapointe said that five of the faulted officers still working on the force had been suspended, while three others were switched to administrative work.

"I'll just go as far as saying that we weren't aware of all the allegations that were put forward in the report," he told [CBC News](#).

Montreal police are overseeing an internal investigation that will involve two indigenous officers, the provincial government recently announced. Quebec's National Assembly has also launched its own probe, according to the CBC.

In the meantime, there have been efforts to improve safety for indigenous women, CBC reports.

All Val-d'Or police cruisers will now be equipped with cameras and occasionally social workers will ride alongside officers. The town is also funding more aboriginal housing and day shelters for the homeless.

The federal government recently launched its inquiry into the national crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women that is expected to address police. However, aboriginal and municipal leaders want to see a separate, provincial effort as well.

The Assembly of First Nations, the city of Val-d'Or and the Grand Council of the Cree are calling on Quebec to hold an independent public commission of inquiry on the relationships between police and First Nations.

"Make no mistake, we do not pretend to have solved the matter and [declared it] over," Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come said in a news release on December 15.

Such reports are rampant nationwide, he said.

"Reports of abuse continue to come in from other regions, including Cree territory," he said. "This is not just a Val-d'Or problem. It does not belong only to Val-d'Or. This is systemic. This belongs to everyone. Quebec must take position on these matters of public security."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/12/investigation-alleged-police-abuse-indigenous-women-quebec-under-way-163049>

## **First Nation safety officers being trained in Thompson**

IAN GRAHAM / THOMPSON CITIZEN  
JANUARY 14, 2016 09:54 AM

Thompson is one of three training sites in the province for more than 100 First Nations safety officers who will work closely with the RCMP and other law enforcement agencies in 31 communities, many in Northern Manitoba, the provincial government announced Jan. 13.

Training focused on topics including enforcement powers, arrest, searches and seizures, use of force and officer safety, among others, is being offered through Assiniboine Community College in Thompson, Dauphin and Brandon for students from 31 First Nations that received federal funding for the discontinued band constable program that this program replaces.

“First Nations communities deserve the same quality of policing and public safety that all Manitobans are entitled to,” said Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak. (MKO) Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson in a news release. “We acknowledge this new program as a step toward public safety on First Nations that will provide safety officers from the communities with the necessary training to achieve that goal.”

Communities that the program will serve include Barren Lands First Nation, Cross Lake First Nation, God’s Lake First Nation, Manto Sipi First Nation, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Misipawistik Cree Nation, Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Norway House Cree Nation, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin First Nation, Red Sucker Lake First Nation, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Shamattawa First Nation, St. Theresa Point First Nation, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, Wasagamack First Nation and York Factory First Nation.

“The First Nations Safety Officer Program is an important milestone in our province and we are excited to see this partnership with First Nation communities and the federal government move forward,” said Attorney General and Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh. “Officers who are well-trained, and who know and understand their own communities, are critical to improving public safety for First Nations people.”

First Nation safety officers’ duties will include crime prevention, enforcing band bylaws and some provincial laws.



“Safety is a big concern in many of our communities, which is why the First Nations Safety Officer Program has been established to replace the Band Constable program cancelled by the previous federal government,” said Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson. “I am pleased that we are moving forward to ensure safety officers will be equipped with the training they need to help keep their communities safe.”

The program was created by the province in November 2014 to help replace the old federal band constable program. Manitoba and the federal government are providing \$2.7 million in funding to support the new service.

“We look forward to this new partnership with the First Nation Safety Officers,” said RCMP “D” Division commanding officer Asst. Commissioner Kevin Brosseau. “They will be an important resource for communities and will work closely with RCMP officers across Northern Manitoba to prevent crime and enhance public safety.”

See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/first-nation-safety-officers-being-trained-in-thompson-1.2150968#sthash.WgyYBAM0.dpuf>

## **Prison watchdog says more than a quarter of federal inmates are aboriginal people**

**Howard Sapers, Canada's correctional investigator, says efforts to curb high numbers not working**

CBC News Posted: Jan 14, 2016 12:21 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 14, 2016 3:23 PM ET



Canada's prison watchdog says that for the first time aboriginal people make up more than a quarter of inmates in federal jails. (CBC)

For the first time, more than a quarter of inmates in Canadian prisons are aboriginal people.

"The most current figure we have is quite shocking," said Correctional Investigator of

Canada Howard Sapers, the country's prison ombudsman.

"In federal corrections, 25.4 per cent of the incarcerated population are now of aboriginal ancestry."



Howard Sapers, Canada's prison watchdog, says he's shocked by the growing number of aboriginal inmates. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

Of 14,624 inmates across the country, 3,723 are aboriginal people. In the Prairie provinces, 48 per cent of federal inmates are aboriginal people.

For aboriginal women, the numbers are even higher. According to the most recent statistics, more than 36 per cent of women in prison are of aboriginal descent. Sapers said that three decades ago, 10 per cent of federal inmates were aboriginal people, but the number continues to grow each year.

"It's actually quite a dramatic increase," Sapers said. "It was identified year after year after year as a major concern, as a human rights concern."

Sapers said efforts to try to curb the high numbers don't seem to be working, including a Supreme Court decision that encourages courts to take aboriginal history into account when sentencing individuals.

He points to poverty, the history of colonialism and lingering effects of the residential school system as reasons why so many aboriginal people suffer from alcoholism and other problems that land them in the justice system.

## **'It doesn't surprise me'**

"Unfortunately, it doesn't surprise me," says Kim Pate, executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, a group that advocates for the rights of women and girls in the justice system.

"In the next few years we could be looking at 40 to 50 per cent of the federal jail population being aboriginal women."

Pate says years of cuts to social services, health care, and education has multiplied problems faced by indigenous people in Canada.

"The greater the inequality, the greater the likelihood that they'll end up missing, dead, in the streets or in jail."

Still, she's optimistic that Canada's new federal ministers of Public Safety, Justice and Indigenous Affairs will take a serious look at calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which would see more funding for diversion and "realistic alternatives to imprisonment."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/aboriginal-inmates-1.3403647>

## Aboriginal Education & Youth

### **Dalhousie offers aboriginal students support with elders-in-residence program**

The co-ordinator of program, in which students are provided with counselling and encouragement, says the initiative signals a new era of inclusivity for indigenous people in Nova Scotia.



Geri Musqua-LeBlanc, coordinator of the new Elders in Residence program at Dalhousie University.

**By:** Aly Thomson The Canadian Press, Published on Sun Jan 10 2016

HALIFAX—The co-ordinator of a program at Halifax's Dalhousie University that connects aboriginal elders with students says the initiative signals a new era of inclusivity for indigenous people in the region.

Geri Musqua-LeBlanc, head of the university's Elders in Residence program, said the elders support students by providing counselling and traditional cultural rituals such as smudging, a purification ceremony that involves burning herbs like sage and sweet grass.

"We're there to support the students and encourage them, as their grandmothers and grandfathers would," said Musqua-LeBlanc, who is originally from the Nakawe nation in Saskatchewan. "A lot of them are away from home and they miss home. They miss their ceremonies, so we're there to provide that for them.

"My personal belief is that I have a sacred responsibility to pass down traditional indigenous knowledge to the younger generation."

Musqua-LeBlanc said aboriginal people have long endured institutional racism in the province. However the public is beginning to understand and accept the historical atrocities committed against aboriginal people in Canada, such as the residential schools where many endured physical and sexual abuse, she said.

"Finally, our story is coming out to the public," said Musqua-LeBlanc in a recent interview. "There's a change in the climate of the way indigenous people are accepted ... and I'm optimistic. We're being accepted, we're being included and our stories are out there."

Earlier this year, Dalhousie reached out to the nearby Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre about establishing a program that connects aboriginal elders with students at the school, said Musqua-LeBlanc. She said the elders were then given free rein in developing the program and its mandate.

The program launched last month and there are five elders involved: Musqua-LeBlanc, Diana Hirtle, Muriel Rosevere, Billy Lewis, Doug Knockwood and Deb Eisan.

Dylan Letendre, an undergraduate student studying International Development and Economics, said the program offers supports that he would normally receive at home more than 4,000 kilometres away in Prince Albert, Sask.

"Moving to the East Coast from the Prairies, you're not only going to a place that geographically removed, but you're also leaving your support networks behind," said Letendre, who is Métis.

"I can't go to university and expect my culture to not have an impact on my experience. When my culture isn't represented and my support networks aren't there, I struggle ... My culture is available to me here and not only that, the student body around me has the opportunity to learn about my culture."

The 29-year-old man said he agrees with Musqua-LeBlanc that the program is a positive step toward the inclusivity in the region, but he said more could be done to encourage people outside of the aboriginal community to participate in the culture.

“Having programs available for aboriginal students as absolutely necessary, but what we need is for the non-aboriginal community to be able to feel comfortable accessing those resources as well and understanding their role in our community,” said Letendre.

A spokeswoman for Dalhousie said the exact number of aboriginal students at the school isn't known because students decide whether to identify as aboriginal on their admissions applications. Lindsay Dowling said 429 students self-identified as aboriginal in 2015, up from 293 four years ago.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/10/dalhousie-offers-aboriginal-students-support-with-elders-in-residence-program.html>

## Saskatoon Cree bilingual school plagued by old building, overcrowding

**Catholic school board asking for \$16 million renovation**

CBC News Posted: Jan 08, 2016 5:40 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 08, 2016 5:40 PM CT



Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Superintendent Gordon Martel and St. Frances School Principal Darren Fradette say the ageing school is creating problems for students. (David Shield/CBC News)

In a way, St. Frances school is a victim of its own success.

Home to the only Cree bilingual program in the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School system, the school's enrolment has ballooned in the past several years. When the Cree program started, St. Frances School only had around 100 students. Now, that number has quadrupled, to 475 students.

Right now, the aging school is sitting at 140 per cent capacity, impacting everything from cultural programming to gym class.

"When you have half the students in portable classrooms, you don't have the same infrastructure, core infrastructure to support them," said Saskatoon Catholic School

Superintendent Gordon Martell. "There's a critical space shortage. Washroom facilities are a problem here."

Parents and students are getting frustrated with the situation. The board and school administration plan to meet with parents at a community consultation later this week.

"A lot of these parents come from other schools, and they know that other schools have more gym time, have better kitchens, they have better community rooms, we don't have a community room here," said Martell. "They know what they're giving up, but they know what they're gaining with this language program here."

While overcrowding is causing problems, the aging school building comes with its own issues. Multiple flights of stairs mean some areas of the school aren't accessible to special-needs students. Meanwhile, the school's multiple portable classrooms have spread out over the playground, eating up soccer fields and large playing areas.

The Catholic school board is asking the provincial government for \$16 million dollars for a massive renovation to help solve the issue. Officials at the Ministry of Education have received the request, and will be weighing the merits of the proposal.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/cree-bilingual-school-overcrowding-1.3396602>

## **Edmonton Nehiyaw, or Cree, class connects students with culture**

This is the fifth year Quinn has taught introductory Nehiyaw (better known as Cree) classes through the Centre for Race and Culture.



Reuben Quinn teaches Nehiyaw, or Cree, classes through the Centre for Race and Culture

**By: Alex Boyd** Metro Published on Sat Jan 09 2016

For Reuben Quinn, language means more than words—it's a step on the road to reconciliation.

This is the fifth year Quinn has taught introductory Nehiyaw (better known as Cree) classes through the Centre for Race and Culture.

His is not the only class in Edmonton but it's the only one to use a star chart—an eight-sided symbol made up of 44 symbols, 14 consonants and eight directions—that has a much cultural meaning as it does phonetic.

Each symbol represents a sound, but is also a cultural link.

“Within each of these is a teaching,” he says, pointing to one of the symbols. “This one here, which means ‘Love each and one another.’”

It's a method Quinn learned after being liberated from residential school in the early 1970s. He'd grown up speaking Nehiyaw on the Saddle Lake reserve but was beaten for using it while in school, leaving him to relearn much of it later in life.

Now, he's not a fully fluent speaker, but sees the revival of the language as a key to regaining culture.

“A conquered people does not write their own history,” he says. “[Without language] you take on the ideas of the colonizer.”

In classes he uses the example of the word ‘Iskeew,’ which means woman, and he says, roughly translates as someone who can bring forth generations.

But somewhere along the way it's been misinterpreted as ‘Squaw,’ a word with less positive connotations.

“It's one of the saddest parts of our history,” Quinn says.

Quinn says residential schooling chipped away at indigenous culture and language suffered. Linguists estimate that Nehiyaw has dropped from about 600,000 words prior to European contact to about 30,000 now.

Since starting the class, more than 200 students have passed through his classroom. Quinn says the class attracts a mix of people, from those of aboriginal heritage looking to reconnect with their history to people with adopted children of aboriginal heritage to those who just wanted to communicate more easily.

While Quinn is clear to cover the history of the language and recent policies that have led to the decline of the language, he aims to make it inclusive for everyone.



“One of the things I refuse to do is guilt making or blame finding, I absolutely refuse to do that,” he says.

He notes that while historically government policy contributed to the language’s decline, the class is now funded through grants from Heritage Canada.

“It’s quite hard to give us back our lifestyle,” he says, but regaining language is important.

“It’s a small part of reconciliation, but it’s reconciliation nonetheless.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2016/01/10/edmonton-nehiyaw-or-cree-connects-students-with-culture.html>

## Ontario human rights chief calls for race-based stats for kids in care

Renu Mandhane suggests systemic discrimination is behind overrepresentation of black and aboriginal kids in care.



Renu Mandhane, chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, says the body is getting involved because of apparent "elements of systemic and persistent discrimination" in the CAS system.

**By: Sandro Contenta** News, **Laurie Monsebraaten** Social justice reporter, and Jim Rankin Staff Reporters, Published on Mon Jan 11 2016

“Systemic and persistent discrimination” is likely involved in a disproportionate number of aboriginal and black children being taken from their families and placed into care, Ontario’s Chief Human Rights Commissioner says.

Ending the trend, Renu Mandhane added, begins with the provincial government collecting race-based data to gauge the full extent of the problem — something it does not currently do.

How can the government and children's aid societies understand the needs of the children and families they serve — and the discrimination they might be facing — if they don't know the race and culture of those families, Mandhane asked in an interview with the Star.

"We wouldn't get involved unless we thought there were elements of systemic and persistent discrimination at play," Mandhane said, describing her commission's decision to examine the overrepresentation of aboriginal and black children in foster homes or group homes.

The human rights commission is the latest in a long list of agencies and community groups to call on the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to collect and make public race-based data. The Children's Aid Society of Toronto took the step in the summer of 2015 after the Toronto Star revealed that 41.8 per cent of children in its care are black. The city's under-18 black population, meanwhile, is 8.2 per cent. Children's Minister Tracy MacCharles said a year ago that she would consider the idea, but she has not directed children's aid societies to collect and report the data.

On Friday, a spokeswoman for MacCharles said the idea is something the ministry is "examining closely."

An ongoing Star investigation has found Ontario's most vulnerable children are in the care of a child protection system that is often unaccountable and secretive. Ontario's 47 children's aid societies are privately run but funded by the provincial government — receiving \$1.5 billion in 2015.

Data collection is a messy patchwork. Some societies note the racial backgrounds of their children, and track how they're doing while in care, while others don't. The ministry is setting up a central database to standardize the collection of child protection data but full implementation is years away, and race-based data is so far not part of the program.

On average, 15,625 Ontario children were in foster or group-home care in 2014-15.

Perhaps the most accurate province-wide count of Ontario aboriginal children — First Nations, Métis and Inuit — in care is through a government-mandated survey known as OnLAC. Its data, obtained and first published by the Star, found in 2014 that 23 per cent of children in care for at least one year were First Nations. That is 9.3 times more than the 2.5 per cent of Ontario's under-18 population who are First Nations.

Mandhane said her commission's call for race-based data is partly a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which recently recommended that governments publish annual reports on the number of aboriginal children in care. That commission described the decades-long policy of forcing aboriginal children into residential schools as cultural genocide. Some aboriginal leaders argue the process continues under the child protection system.

Less than 25 per cent of children in Ontario are removed from their families due to physical or sexual abuse. The rest are removed because of neglect — often as a result of

poverty — domestic violence between parents, or a parent's inability to care for a child due to mental health troubles or addiction.

“One of the things we hear from indigenous and racialized communities is that in many ways the child welfare system is a Band-Aid solution,” Mandhane said. It doesn't deal with the underlying reasons, such as poverty and a lack of social services, that make families unable to properly care for their children.

“We need to really look beyond the child welfare system when we're thinking about what the answers are to this overrepresentation” of aboriginal and black children, Mandhane said.

Her commission will be sending letters to all children's aid societies asking for data on the racial background of the children in their care. The letters will note that her commission has the legal power to obtain such information. The commission will also consult community groups.

The commission has a broad mandate, from public education to launching complaints with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, which rules on claims of discrimination and harassment under the Human Rights Code. The commission wants to compile the race-based data before deciding what action to take.

“We want to support these (children's aid) institutions to understand the importance of race-based data,” Mandhane said. “We never start with the stick first; we always start with the carrot.”

**By the numbers:**

**42%** The proportion of children in the care of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto in 2013 who were black or have one black parent.

**8%** The proportion of people under 18 in Toronto who are black.

**23%** The proportion of Ontario children in care who are First Nations.

**2.5%** The proportion of people under 18 in Ontario who are First Nations.

**2.3%** The proportion of Ontario children in care who are Métis — 3.4 times their share of the under-18 population.

**0.47%** The proportion of Ontario children in care who are Inuit – 11.3 times their share of the under-18 population.

**Sources:** Children's Aid Society of Toronto and OnLAC annual survey.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2016/01/11/ontario-human-rights-chief-calls-for-race-based-stats-for-kids-in-care.html>

## **Manitoba First Nations to regain control of southern child-welfare organization**

National News | January 12, 2016 by APTN National News |



(Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross)

### **The Canadian Press**

**WINNIPEG** – An announcement was expected as early as Tuesday on a new seven-person board of First Nations people who will regain control of a southern Manitoba child-welfare organization.

The Manitoba government was also expected to cancel its order appointing an administrator to run the Southern Authority, which oversees 10 frontline agencies and about 4,500 children in care.

The authority has been under provincial control for more than three years, sparked by a dispute between Manitoba's top chiefs and the organization over whether chiefs could sit on its board.

The matter was before a court in the fall of 2012 when the board fell below levels allowed by legislation, forcing the province to step in and take over.

No chiefs will sit on the new board but have vetted its members, who include an education expert, a former senior child-welfare official and two former band councillors.

The new board was to meet Tuesday with the Southern Authority's new acting CEO, Tara Petti.

The provincial takeover essentially stripped First Nations of any direct authority over child welfare, a key element of devolution, which was meant to hand over responsibility of child-welfare programs to Indigenous people.

Many First Nations leaders, including current Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, have argued that democratically elected band chiefs ought to have some say in the running of a key public service on their reserve.

Others, including senior child welfare officials, worried chiefs might be prone to interfere in specific cases for political gain.

“To me that was a really sad day, that we got to that point,” said Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross of the province’s takeover.

Southern Grand Chief Terry Nelson said he hopes the new board pushes to keep far more children on reserve rather than sending them to Winnipeg or other cities for foster care. He expressed skepticism of a child-welfare system that was imposed on First Nations people, even under the guise of devolution.

“This is an interim step,” said Nelson of the Southern Authority’s new board. “But legitimizing someone else’s system isn’t the way to go.”

The province took over the Northern Authority more than a year ago, saying it wasn’t keeping proper track of children in care and wasn’t moving quickly enough on key recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

Irvin-Ross said she hopes the northern organization comes out of administration this spring. She said the province is finalizing a memo with northern chiefs that will outline the steps the authority must follow in order to be transferred back to a First Nations board.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/12/manitoba-first-nations-to-regain-control-of-southern-child-welfare-organization/>

## **First Nations child welfare agencies preparing for ruling in Canadian Human Rights case**

National News | January 12, 2016 by Brandi Morin



(The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal says it will release its ruling on the discrimination case against Canada before the end of January)

***Brandi Morin***

***APTN National News***

The woman behind a Canadian human rights tribunal case alleging the Canadian government discriminates against First Nations children in the care of child welfare is preparing for the ruling.

Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, along with the Assembly of First Nations, filed the human rights complaint in 2007.

The ruling, expected before the end of January, will be a historic one for First Nations children said Blackstock.

In an email sent to a number of agencies across the country, Blackstock outlined what is at stake and how best to get the message across to Canadians.

“We absolutely are expecting a ruling in our favour just based on the evidence that was put before the tribunal,” said Blackstock. “Not only are the funding policies of the federal government discriminatory in child welfare but also its inequitable and flawed implementation of Jordan’s Principle.”

Jordan’s Principle was motion that the House of Commons voted unanimously to pass in 2007. It called on the Canada to resolve jurisdictional disputes within, and between governments, about payment for government services provided to First Nations children for any health needs.

According to Blackstock, this is the first time that a developed country has been on trial regarding allegations of racial discrimination against First Nations children before a body that has the power to make a binding order. Blackstock said the coming ruling will set a precedent to address other areas of funding shortfalls in First Nations communities.

“A decision in our favor will only be really successful if we see the lives of children and their families changing for the better,” said Blackstock.

Estimates by the Canadian government add up to a \$108 million per year shortfall in funding for on-reserve child welfare agencies plus a 3 per cent per year inflation rate increase. These amounts are minimum requirements to bring agencies up to par, said Blackstock, however, additional funds for other needs such as agency infrastructure and transportation aren’t included.

“I have been to many Indian Affairs offices and none of them have black mold infestation,” she said. “I’ve been to many First Nation agencies where it is a problem. When we have situations that don’t even support employees, let alone ensuring that children are safe in those spaces, that’s a real problem.”

The Alberta Child Advocate director Del Graff is also looking forward to the upcoming ruling.

“We are very hopeful that the ruling will be favourable to the interest of Aboriginal kids and their families. People who look at this issue almost invariably agree that there needs to be a change in how child welfare is done,” said Graff.

Graff is leading a special report about the over-representation of Aboriginal children in foster care in Alberta. Although only nine percent of the youth population in Alberta is of Aboriginal ancestry, 69 percent of kids in care in Alberta are Aboriginal.

Graff is hoping the report, currently entering the writing phase, will entice governments to look at creating a serious partnership with Aboriginal communities to improve child welfare services.

Graff is also the vice president of the Canadian Council of the Child and Youth Advocate, an organization that recently made commitments in regards to the rights and interests of young people at the Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

Child welfare is at the top of the TRC’s list on calls to action and called upon governments to take steps to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care.

Graff recognizes the connection between residential school survivors and Aboriginal children who grow up in the foster care system.

“Certainly I see the impact of children who are displaced and don’t know where they belong and lose a sense of who they are in terms of identity. Particularly when they spend their lives in care,” said Graff. “That is of concern and is concerning to all Canadians.



This isn't an issue of First Nation communities or First Nations children it's an issue that involves Canada. I think the TRC put that front and center."

Despite a lack of resources for additional support some First Nations child welfare agencies are seeing success.

Valerie Woods, the director of the Wah-Koh-To-Win Child Care Society in Saddlelake, Alta., said her community is gaining ground with maintaining the number of children in care via working to keep children close to home.

"Often time's kids are aging out faster than we are putting kids into care. So we're reducing our caseload," said Woods.

"The reason why we maintain the same number of cases is because we are repatriating, we are bringing kids home currently receiving services from provincially run agencies," she said.

However, Woods admits that they could be doing a much better job, and working to reduce the number of kids in care if given the same resources as off-reserve agencies.

It's a goal that would be easier to attain if the upcoming ruling sees the release of equitable funding.

While in opposition, the Liberal party admonished the ruling Conservatives often for making Blackstock and the AFN take their complaint to the Tribunal and for its conduct there.

It's not clear whether the now governing Liberals will abide by any ruling the Tribunal releases.

But in a statement to APTN National News from Indigenous Affairs, Minister Carolyn Bennett acknowledged the work Blackstock has done on the issue.

"Her commitment to First Nations children and youth will lead us on this important work of reconciliation by improving the well-being and opportunities of First Nations children across this country," the statement said.

"In discussions with First Nations, I have made it clear that we have to begin work on an overhaul to the Indigenous child welfare system."

Bennett also said she plans to work with Finance Minister Bill Morneau to discuss the new fiscal relationship with Indigenous communities.

There are variances in the capacities of First Nation agencies across the country as they ready for the results of the ruling, said Blackstock.

She said some are ready to hit the ground running as soon as funding becomes available, but others have not yet had the opportunity to consult with their communities to understand how to develop services to meet their needs.

“For some communities that’s going to be the first step, for them to come together and collectively re-dream what it means to have a healthy childhood,” said Blackstock.

She’s hopeful the new Liberal government will take a less contentious stance on the issue than the previous government.

“If I look at the (new) government’s statements certainly there’s room for optimism, but I’m a person who judges things by the actions and again at the level of kids and at this point- nothing has changed for kids on reserve. That’s my marker of when we should feel optimism- when we see changes.

We’re talking about children here who are the most vulnerable members of our communities. To me they should always be at the front of the line when it comes to priorities.”

Blackstock requested a meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Indigenous Affairs minister shortly after the October election.

She has not been contacted.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/12/first-nations-child-welfare-agencies-preparing-for-ruling-in-canadian-human-rights-case/>

## **First aboriginal woman appointed as dean of Canadian law school**

PAOLA LORIGGIO

The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2016 11:27AM EST

Last updated Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016 7:11AM EST

The first aboriginal woman appointed to head a Canadian law school says the next generation of lawyers will better understand and help restore the country’s relationship with indigenous peoples.

Angelique EagleWoman was appointed this week as dean of Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, a position she'll take up in May, a month before the fledgling Thunder Bay, Ont., law school's first class is set to graduate.

EagleWoman, who currently teaches law at the University of Idaho College of Law, said she was drawn in part by Lakehead's mandatory first- and second-year courses in aboriginal law.

That requirement aligns with the recommendations laid out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which call for all law students to take a course in aboriginal people and the law, including the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system.

The recommendations aim to ensure "that this next generation of lawyers would know what the history is and what the legal relationship is between the Canadian federal and provincial governments and indigenous communities," she said.

"Our law graduates will know that history, will know those legal relationships, and then they can go out and they can help with the new collaboration, the new reconciliation."

EagleWoman said her new role is just a "natural progression," one she hopes more people will follow.

"As more and more indigenous people become lawyers, we're also law professors and law deans. And hopefully by blazing this trail, others will follow."

A biography posted on the Idaho school's site says EagleWoman has taught courses on Native American law, tribal nation economics and law, Native American natural resources law, and civil procedure.

The site also says she has written about related topics, including quality of life for indigenous peoples.

One of the highlights of her career was serving as general counsel for her own tribe, the SissetonWahpeton Oyate in Dakota, it says.

EagleWoman said the move to northwestern Ontario feels "natural," and recalled crossing the border to Winnipeg to go shopping with friends when she was younger.

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law opened in the fall of 2013, making it Canada's newest law school.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/first-aboriginal-woman-appointed-as-dean-of-canadian-law-school/article28142224/>

# Blanket exercise teaches history from an indigenous perspective

Part of a month-long awareness campaign at Carleton University called RISE 2016

By Waubgeshig Rice, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 12, 2016 6:29 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 12, 2016 6:29 PM ET



Facilitator Gabrielle Fayant leads participants through the blanket exercise originally developed by KAIROS.

As part of a new month-long awareness campaign, indigenous students at Carleton University hosted a special event that uses blankets to teach about Canadian history from an indigenous perspective.

Known as the "blanket exercise," participants stand on blankets that represent the lands inhabited by indigenous people that eventually became Canada.

"They pretty much tell the story of how the land mass of North America was populated by indigenous people, and then slowly, because of population crashes and them being forced onto reserves, you can see how much land was sort of lost because of settler encroachment," said Ashley Courchene, Carleton student and coordinator of the student union's Aboriginal Service Centre.



The blanketed area becomes smaller as the facilitators lead participants through a historical timeline.

Facilitators pull back and remove the blankets as they guide participants through a historical timeline that includes the treaty-making process, residential schools and other events that impacted indigenous people in Canada.

Facilitator Gabrielle Fayant called the exercise a "reconciliation tool that tells the untold story of the northern part of Turtle Island, which is Canada."

## **Gaining popularity**

The blanket exercise was first developed by the organization KAIROS in the late 1990s as a response to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and it's been gaining popularity as a teaching tool in recent years.

"It's picked up a lot of steam and interest after Idle No More, and now, in particular, the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission]," Fayant said. "It tells the story of how colonization has affected indigenous people, how it's affected the land, and how it's affected relationships between indigenous, newcomers and non-Indigenous people."

The roughly half-hour exercise resonated with Carleton student Olivia de Kergommeaux.

"Although I've learned about the history of colonization throughout my indigenous studies minor, having a visual representation of the destruction of their lands, cultures and way of life makes it much more real," she said.

"Especially to those who have not learned much about the history of indigenous peoples other than from a colonial perspective in high school."

## **Month-long campaign called RISE 2016**

Tuesday's blanket exercise was part of a new campaign spearheaded by indigenous students at Carleton called RISE 2016, which stands for Revitalizing Indigenous Strength and Education.

It features film screenings, art exhibits and live music throughout the month of January.



Ashley Courchene is with the Carleton student union's Aboriginal Service Centre. He spearheaded a new month-long awareness campaign called RISE 2016.

"I feel that a lot of the time, our narratives aren't taught in school," said Courchene, who helped program the campaign. "And if they are, it's kind of like chapter one, 'There were natives,' and chapter two, 'They were gone,' and, 'Hooray Canada.' So this is just to sort of bring a new perspective, a new twist to the narratives that we often hear."

Like the blanket exercise, all RISE 2016 events are free and open to the public.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/blanket-exercise-teaches-history-from-an-indigenous-perspective-1.3400940>

## Saskatchewan graduation rates stall

EMMA GRANEY, REGINA LEADER-POST

Published on: January 13, 2016 | Last Updated: January 13, 2016 4:31 PM CST



File — An empty classroom.

High school graduations in the province have stalled, despite the government's lofty goal of an 85-per-cent graduation rate by 2020.

The government announced the 85-per-cent target in April 2014, the same day it unveiled the province's first-ever education sector plan. In 2013, graduation rates were 74.8 per cent overall, but a dismal 37.4 per cent for self-declared First Nations and Metis students.

Closing the gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students was a huge focus for the province, and it seems it might be working, with aboriginal graduation rates hitting 40.1 per cent last year.

While that may not seem like a huge increase — certainly it's nowhere near the 84.3 per cent of non-aboriginal students who graduated on time last year — rates for non-aboriginal students increased by less than two per cent in the same period.

Considering the government was looking to increase graduation rates by three per cent each year, the tide will have to turn in a big way for Saskatchewan to come close to meeting the 2020 goal.

Deputy education minister Julie MacRae thinks it's possible.

"In reality, (graduation) is the focus of our system," she said.

Still, in a public accounts committee meeting Wednesday, she acknowledged that graduation rates are "very difficult to move in one year," because schooling is a 12- or 13-year process.

But there is some targeted work underway, such as school readiness programs, a focus on Grade 3 reading levels and ensuring high school students are collecting enough credits.

NDP education critic Trent Wotherspoon thinks the government has dropped the ball on graduation rates.

"They offered these lofty promises, but no resources to get the job done," he said.

Wotherspoon said it didn't help that divisions' mid-year funding adjustments were scrapped, "leaving a shortfall of millions" of dollars and no extra cash for extra students.

MacRae called the lack of a mid-year adjustment "regrettable," but said she isn't aware of any research tying graduation rates to funding levels.

The Opposition and ministry can agree on one thing, though — the dire need to close the gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

Wotherspoon called the 40-per-cent graduation rate "deplorable," while MacRae called it an area of "grave concern."



“Our commitment is to every student in Saskatchewan,” MacRae said.

And while she can’t see the number of First Nations and Metis graduates hitting 85 per cent in 2020, she said “if we continue down the path we’re on, we’ll continue to close the gap.”

**Direct Link:** <http://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/saskatchewan-graduation-rates-stall>

## **MUN to build \$4 million Aboriginal House on campus**

By **Laura Howells** -  
January 14, 2016



Plans are underway for a new multi-million dollar building at Memorial University that will serve as a designated safe space for Aboriginal students.

The Aboriginal House, as MUN calls it, will include a large gathering space, study rooms, offices for staff, and other areas for things like child-minding and drumming practice.

“We know that for students to be successful they need to feel a sense of belonging, and a great way to do that is to have a place that they feel is safe,” said Catharyn Andersen, special advisor to the president on Aboriginal Affairs.

“[In the Aboriginal House] they can meet other Aboriginal students and just see in the physical space around them a part of their own culture.”

The project comes out of MUN’s 2009 Aboriginal Task Force Report, which recommended that there be “adequately expanded” space for Aboriginal students on campus.

MUN presently has an Aboriginal Resource Office in the University Centre, but it can only accommodate eight to 10 people at a time.

There are approximately 650 self-identified Aboriginal students at MUN, however, Andersen says the actual number is likely much higher.

“For many there’s definite culture shock coming to St. John’s,” she said.

“Many who are coming to the university and coming to a first year class, not only is the class size potentially bigger than their home community but it’s a very different culture for many.”



“MUN has determined the Aboriginal House will be built next to the Henrietta Harvey Building, in the place of the current Facilities Management storage building in that location.”

**Project to cost \$4 million, externally funded**

MUN has determined the Aboriginal House will be built next to the Henrietta Harvey Building (or math building), in the place of the current Facilities Management storage building in that location. There are already proposed concept designs for the building, which will be more than 7,000 square feet.

The Aboriginal House will cost roughly \$4 million, all of which must come from external donors.

Andersen says that the university is nowhere near that level of funding right now and that she cannot commit to any timelines until the money is secured.

She said, however, that MUN is definitely committed to building the Aboriginal House at some point in the next few years.

## **Other Aboriginal Affairs initiatives in the works**

MUN has also approved a new Aboriginal and Indigenous studies certificate program, which will replace the present Aboriginal Studies minor. Andersen said making the program a certificate means more people from different disciplines will be able to partake in the program, and that the program will have a more stable “home” within the Faculty of Arts with a designated coordinator.

Andersen said the certificate program is one of the steps MUN is taking in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report, released last June.

“I think as a post-secondary institution this is one of the things that we can do to help in that process of rebuilding relationships,” she said.

“The commissioners have stated that education is key to reconciliation. It’s something that we all need to work on—learning about this part of our history, and the legacy of residential schools, but also the history of the relationship between the settlers and Aboriginal people that were here.”

The Aboriginal Task Force Report also recommended developing a Bachelor in Aboriginal Studies, which Andersen says has been considered.

“This is one that will take time and planning, and I hope that the certificate program will help lay the foundation for its development,” she said.

MUN is also developing an Aboriginal Advisory Committee, which should be in place within the next month.

**Direct Link:** <http://themuse.ca/2016/01/14/mun-to-build-4-million-aboriginal-house-on-campus/>

# **Aboriginal Health**

## **Aboriginal Women Say They Were Coerced Into Sterilization**

**The Huffington Post Canada | By Emma Paling**

Posted: 01/08/2016 2:07 pm EST Updated: 01/08/2016 2:59 pm EST

Four aboriginal women told the CBC they were sterilized against their will at the same Saskatoon hospital, according to a report on The Current Thursday.

Melika Popp went to the Royal University Hospital to deliver her second child by C-section in 2008. She said doctors coerced her into having her fallopian tubes tied. The procedure was suggested to her while she was in labour, already “open” for surgery, she said.

Popp said hospital staff lied to her by saying the procedure was reversible.

Another woman, Brenda Pelletier, told CBC News in November she was hounded by a social worker to agree to the procedure after giving birth. A recovering addict at the time, said she was told, “We don’t want you leaving this hospital until it’s done.”

**“Why are you guys doing this to women?”**

After coming forward with her story and learning other women had similar experiences, Popp hired a lawyer in November. She’s calling for a class action lawsuit against the Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) and possibly the provincial and federal governments. “Why are you guys doing this to women?” Popp said in her interview with The Current. “Why are you hurting aboriginal women? This is not happening to anyone who is not coloured or is not a single mother.”

In response to complaints received in October, SHR apologized and changed their policy so tubal ligation requires a woman's consent before she arrives at the hospital to give birth.

The health authority has also committed to hiring an external investigator. No one has been hired yet, as of mid-December the StarPhoenix reported.

Losing the ability to have children made her feel even more disconnected from her aboriginal identity, Popp said. She was taken away from her own birth mother in the ‘60s scoop and was taught to be ashamed of her culture, she told the StarPhoenix.

**“It’s another form of cultural genocide.”**

Canada should recognize both the ‘60s scoop and her sterilization were acts of systemic racism, Popp said. “It’s another form of cultural genocide.” The province disagrees.

The suggestion the provincial government is responsible for this is “flat-out wrong,” Health Minister Dustin Duncan told the National Post. “Clinical decisions are made between patients and their physician and care team,” he said.

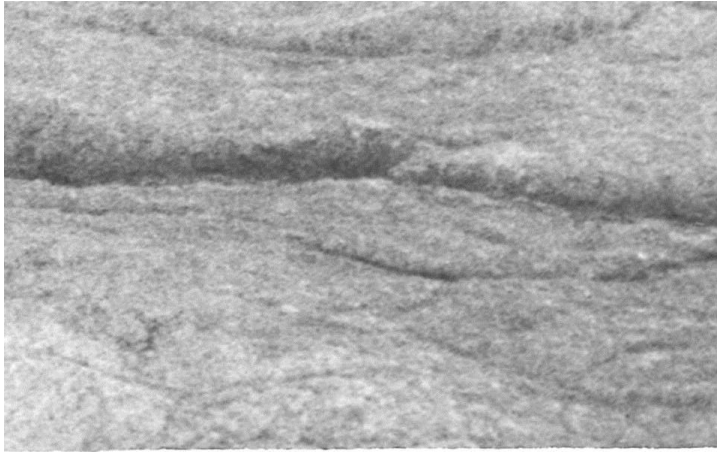
“For anyone to suggest that it occurred because of a government policy is offensive.”

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/08/aboriginal-women-saskatoon-sterilization\\_n\\_8939830.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/08/aboriginal-women-saskatoon-sterilization_n_8939830.html)

## Aboriginal History

### Native Informant

In the 1920s, Knud Rasmussen trekked from Canada to Siberia—some 20,000 miles—by dogsled.



A memorial to Knud Rasmussen in Ilulissat (formerly Jakobshavn), Greenland, the town in which he was born.

By **HOWARD SCHNEIDER**

Jan. 8, 2016 1:35 p.m. ET

**Is Knud Rasmussen** the most remarkable polar explorer that few people have ever heard of? In “White Eskimo: Knud Rasmussen’s Fearless Journey Into the Heart of the Arctic,” Stephen R. Bown makes a good case that he is. Shackleton, Scott, Peary and Amundsen: These names still spark recognition, excitement and controversy. But “apart from specialists in the Arctic, Inuit ethnography and Arctic exploration,” Mr. Bown writes, “few know what an adventurous life Rasmussen led.”

Explorer, ethnographer and author, man of the world but perhaps most at home within Inuit culture, Rasmussen “was as much an explorer of people as of place,” Mr. Bown writes. “During nearly three decades of travel by dogsled throughout the polar world, he visited every Inuit tribe then known to exist” and “published dozens of anthologies of Greenlandic and Inuit songs, stories, folk tales, legends and poems.”

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## WHITE ESKIMO

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By Stephen R. Bown

*Da Capo, 339 pages, \$27.99*

He seemed fated to carry out his exploits. He was born in 1879 in Greenland and raised in Jakobshavn, in Greenland’s north. (Southern Greenland was a Danish colony; northern Greenland was uncolonized, though Rasmussen was a Danish citizen.) His father, a Danish missionary, “viewed his job as that of an advocate [for Inuits] rather than a crusher of local language and customs.” His mother was a native Greenlandic and one-quarter Inuit. He grew up speaking fluent Greenlandic and Danish, and, through his mother’s family, “he absorbed a great deal of [Inuit] culture,” including how to dogsled, hunt and survive in the most hostile Arctic environs.

What he didn’t learn was how to thrive in school. He was an unhappy boy and a poor student in a Copenhagen boarding school and barely graduated in 1899. He was also academically adrift at a Danish college, where he spent more time partying than studying. After dropping out, he lived something of a bohemian life in Copenhagen for a while.

(He wanted to act at one time; at another, he aspired to be an opera singer.) He wasn't tall, dark and handsome; he was short—5-foot-5—dark and handsome. (The 22-year-old Knud had a child out of wedlock, and he was a serial philanderer after his marriage in 1908.)

In 1901, while covering the Nordic Games in Stockholm as a freelance journalist, he talked his way into a glitzy soiree and beguiled a wealthy businessman into sponsoring an exploratory trip to Lapland. The trip became the prototype for future expeditions: coaxing wealthy individuals to support his endeavors, living hard outdoors, and mingling with and studying the indigenous inhabitants.

In 1902, Rasmussen joined an expedition that had been organized to explore the northern reaches of Greenland by dogsled. For 21½ years, the six explorers endured savage weather, disease and near starvation. But they reached the land of the Etah Eskimos, “who lived farther north than any other people on earth, in a land Rasmussen called ‘The Kingdom of the North Wind,’ ” Mr. Bown writes. Previous contacts with Westerners had been rare. Rasmussen discovered that his Greenlandic dialect was close enough to the Etah Eskimos' language for them to communicate. He got to work—befriending them, hunting with them and recording their folklore.

When Rasmussen returned to Copenhagen in 1904, he was lionized by the press and the public. His two books about his journey boosted his fame. They offered travel details, character studies and, of course, sympathetic accounts of the Inuits. His sympathy, according to Mr. Bown, derived from “an intuitive sense of human nature and a deep understanding of Inuit culture, not only the rituals and customs but also an insight into why those rituals and customs came to be, and an acceptance of them even when they seemed cruel or violent by Danish standards.” Cruel and violent, indeed. Among the practices that Rasmussen condoned were infanticide and cannibalism. “As Rasmussen was fond of saying,” Mr. Bown writes, “a life in such a raw and unforgiving environment doesn't produce squeamish hothouse plants.”

In 1910, Knud conceived a plan to establish a trading post in northern Greenland, partly as a business endeavor to obtain fox pelts from the Inuits but mostly because he “believed that the northern Greenlanders needed the protection of a nation-state to help them make the transition to a market economy and prevent their exploitation.” With the financial support of yet another businessman, Rasmussen (and his longtime friend and traveling companion Peter Freuchen) opened his post and called it Thule, “the term ancient geographers placed on their charts to signify the farthest north territory inhabited by people.” The entrepôt became the jumping-off point for a number of expeditions.

In November 1921, the fifth and most ambitious Thule Expedition landed on what is known today as Danish Island—part of North America. After 18 months exploring the enormous terrain west of Hudson Bay, the party split up. In March 1923 Rasmussen and two Inuits (one of them Rasmussen's mistress) set off on what would become the “longest sled journey in history and the first through the entire Northwest Passage.” They traveled 20,000 miles over 31½ years, traversing Canada and Alaska, where the trio wended its way to Point Barrow, “the most northerly permanent settlement in North

America.” They even reached Siberia for a brief stay before being deported by Soviet authorities. Mr. Bown maintains that scientists today have shown that Rasmussen’s theories about Inuit migration were “mostly right”: About 1,500 to 2,000 years ago the Inuits began moving from Alaska across Canada; after several centuries, they reached Greenland. He was wrong, though, in supposing that the Inuits and North American Indians were at one time the same people.

Rasmussen was 45 when the fifth Thule Expedition concluded, and he knew that, his inveterate wanderlust notwithstanding, his days of derring-do were over. But he didn’t lapse into a stagnant existence. He continued to turn out books and articles, lectured, met VIPs, and served as a pundit and consultant on Inuit topics. He also assisted in the making of the film “S.O.S. Iceberg” (1933) and subsequently produced his own film, “The Wedding of Palo” (1934), an Inuit love story. He even organized and accompanied the Sixth and Seventh Thule Expeditions in Greenland, but because of modern technology, like motorized sleds, the missions lacked the man-against-nature challenges that Rasmussen craved. He died in December 1933 at the age of 54 from a rare form of botulism—contracted from tainted meat probably consumed while feasting on Inuit food.

“White Eskimo”—the first English-language biography of Knud Rasmussen—offers much pleasure. Mr. Bown’s prose is clear and lively, and while he clearly believes that Rasmussen was an extraordinary man, he doesn’t dodge Rasmussen’s flaws, such as his adulteries and frequent apathy toward his three children. My one misgiving is that the author doesn’t more fully examine his subject’s relationship with the Zeitgeist. “S.O.S. Iceberg,” the film that Rasmussen consulted on, starred Leni Riefenstahl, who later became Hitler’s favorite moviemaker. Before working on “S.O.S. Iceberg,” she had appeared in a number of “mountain films,” films that, as Pauline Kael wrote, were “full of that Promethean Alpine idealism about the conquest of the peaks which was soon after to become identified with Nazi mysticism.” Since Rasmussen revered nature, it would be quite interesting to know whether he and Riefenstahl ever discussed ideology and Kultur.

Perhaps I’m nitpicking, so I will leave the last word to Mr. Bown: “Without doubt, [Rasmussen’s] explorations are legendary, and his collections and translations of Inuit philosophy, legends and poetry a groundbreaking literary and cultural feat, but perhaps Knud Rasmussen’s underlying greatness lay in his warmth—his genuine passion for life and his deep respect for all those whose world he shared.”

—Mr. Schneider reviews books for newspapers and magazines.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.wsj.com/articles/native-informant-1452278158>

## **'Gone Forever': Archaeologist Warns Site C Threatens First Nations Historic Sites**

Protesters risk arrest to protect fort and surrounding encampment sites from BC Hydro flood plan.

By Sarah K. Cox, 9 Jan 2016, *Desmog Canada*





A decades-old archaeology dig is now the site of a protest camp. Photo by Yvonne Tupper.

One of the archaeologists who excavated the first European fur trading post in B.C. says much remains to be discovered about historical First Nations encampments near the site and valuable information will be lost forever if it is flooded for the Site C dam.

Lakehead University professor Scott Hamilton, a specialist in fur trade historic archaeology and ethnohistory, was a PhD student at Simon Fraser University when he spent two summers in the 1980s as the "pit boss" overseeing a dig to uncover the remains of the Rocky Mountain Fort.

The site, near the confluence of the Peace and Moberly Rivers in northeastern B.C., is the scene of a First Nations-led standoff aimed at preventing BC Hydro from logging an area slated to be flooded by Site C's reservoir, which would stretch for 107-kilometres along the Peace River and its tributaries.

Treaty 8 members and local farmers are camped out in minus-20-degree weather, vowing to risk arrest to protect Rocky Mountain Fort and the rest of the Peace River Valley from Site C. They have prevented planned logging from taking place so far this year.

Hamilton said excavations in the 1980s were "very much predisposed" to focus on fort structures and not on the relationship of aboriginal communities to the forts and fur trade. He said key information about the role of First Nations could be interpreted by examining the remains of encampments used by the Beaver and Sekani peoples who came to Rocky Mountain Fort to trade furs such as beaver, marten, lynx and fisher.

Adequate time was not taken to locate and study aboriginal encampments that "slipped through the cracks" because archeologists, with funding from the now defunct B.C. Heritage Trust, were busy excavating the remains of two fort buildings they found, said Hamilton.

"What about all those hard to find, hard to interpret, widely scattered aboriginal camps that represented the aboriginal side of the ledger in the fur trade?" he said.

"This is the great unknown in so much of fur trade history. How did aboriginal people engage in this enterprise? As active participants or passive pawns? And how does this experience resonate in aboriginal communities today?"

Locating and studying First Nations encampments near Rocky Mountain Fort would offer new insights into aboriginal involvement in the fur trade, said Hamilton. "We haven't done very much of that yet and they will be gone forever if this project proceeds."

### **'A significant piece of western Canadian history'**

The fort site, which Hamilton calls "a big deal" for its time in Canadian history, was selected in 1793 by explorer Alexander Mackenzie, who called it "an excellent situation for a fort or factory, as there is plenty of wood, and every reason to believe that the country abounds in beaver."

The fort housed French Canadian voyageurs working for the North West Company, which later merged with the Hudson's Bay Company. The outpost, where explorers David Thompson and John Finlay also stayed, was the gateway for exploration of the interior of B.C. and fur trade expansion.

Notably, Rocky Mountain Fort functioned as a provisioning centre for the fur trade industry. Using aboriginal food preservation techniques, it manufactured pemmican, or dried meat, for the long canoe journeys east to transport furs collected by aboriginal hunters to European markets. Explorers and voyageurs rendered grease from animal carcasses in order to preserve meat.

Among the many artifacts uncovered at the Rocky Mountain Fort during three-month long excavations in 1986 and 1987 were elk, bison and other animal bones, as well as grease from rendering.

David Burley, the Simon Fraser University archaeologist who oversaw the excavation project, said he is satisfied that archaeologists uncovered all the information they needed in order to understand the fort's layout and functions. "It's a significant piece of western Canadian history," said Burley.

More than 20,000 artifacts were found, from glass beads, brass cufflinks and a glass bottle originally containing "Essence of Peppermint" to fishhooks, razors, axes and awls. Traditional Native bone and antler tools, as well as Micmac-style stone pipes, were also found and boxed.

Archeologists discovered the remains of a stone fireplace made of river cobblestones in the fort's main building. "We took it apart and labeled each stone, and drew a diagram of how to put it back together again," said Burley. The fireplace is currently in boxes at SFU.

The environmental impact statement for Site C describes Rocky Mountain Fort as one of 42 heritage sites that would be affected by the dam. It says Rocky Mountain Fort was revisited as part of the study and "general site observations were made, but no assessment work was conducted as part of this program as extensive excavations have been previously completed at this site."

Hamilton said he has very mixed feelings about the idea of much of the Peace River Valley being destroyed for the \$8.8 billion Site C dam. "I'm not happy with the idea of that valley being flooded because of my own personal associations, but also because of the heritage and archaeological values that are going to be compromised." 🐾

**Direct Link:** [http://thetyee.ca/News/2016/01/09/Site-C-Threatens-Historic-Sites/?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_content=011016-3&utm\\_campaign=editorial-0116](http://thetyee.ca/News/2016/01/09/Site-C-Threatens-Historic-Sites/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_content=011016-3&utm_campaign=editorial-0116)

## 'The Pass System' explores dark chapter in Canadian history

The Pass System, a documentary film directed by Alex Williams, explores this dark chapter, still shrouded in secrecy.



Leona Blondeau in her home in George Gordon First Nations Reserve near Punnichy, Sask., on Jan. 7. Blondeau, 82, says she experienced restrictions even after the government policy was revoked in 1941 when she was 8.

**By: Joanna Smith** Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Sun Jan 10 2016

OTTAWA—Charles Sawphawpahkayo wanted to get married.

To do that, the man from a reserve near Duck Lake, Sask. now known as Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation would need to travel to the bigger town of Battleford, about 140 kilometres away as the crow flies.

Before he could leave, however, Sawphawpahkayo, presumably an adult, would need the written authorization of the local Indian agent, who signed the required permission slip—issued by the Department of Indian Affairs — on June 3, 1897.

The agent granted him 10 days away from the reserve.

The yellowed document is one of many featured in a new documentary film called The Pass System, for which director Alex Williams spent five years piecing together a dark and little-known chapter of Canadian history that had the federal government — fully

aware it was acting without any legal authority — forbid First Nations in the prairies from leaving their reserves.

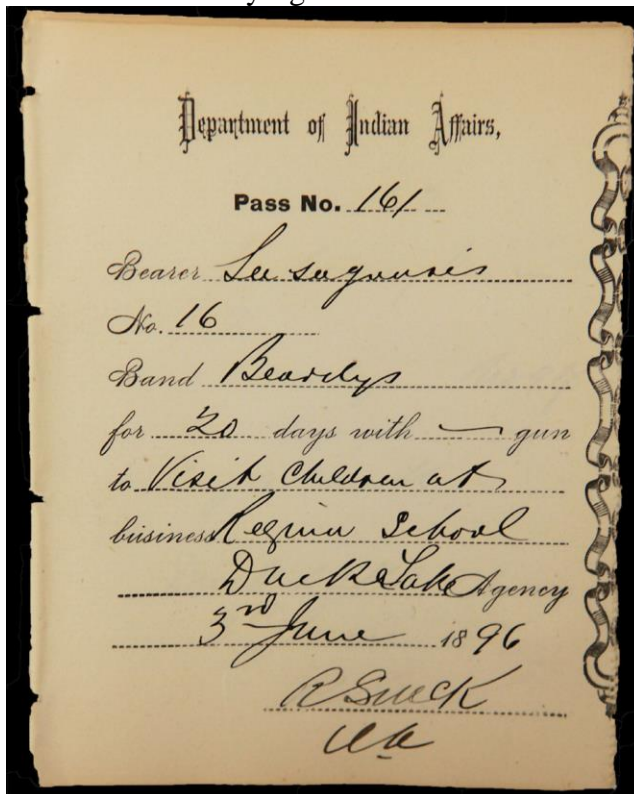
“Canadians largely talk about settlement and pioneers and use benign and heroic language to describe what happened here and what actually happened is quite brutal and if they were to have experienced what First Nations experienced they might have a different opinion about Canadian history,” said Williams, who grew up in Saskatoon.

The film, narrated by actress Tantoo Cardinal, shows how the system, first approved by Sir John A. Macdonald during his second turn as prime minister, lasted nearly 60 years without ever going through Parliament.

The Toronto premiere of the film will be at the TIFF Bell Lightbox on Feb. 19, with another showing, and a talkback panel, on Feb. 21.

The pass system was first implemented as an emergency measure — designed to be temporary — in response to the North-West Rebellion led by Louis Riel, as the Canadian government was concerned resistance could grow out of control if indigenous people began leaving their reserves to join in.

The idea went all the way up the chain to Macdonald, who approved it even for “loyal” bands, although he acknowledged they were on shaky ground in that requiring passes would violate treaty rights:



“...should resistance be offered on the ground of Treaty rights the obtaining of a pass should not be insisted upon as regards loyal Indians,” Macdonald wrote in a letter to Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney on October 28, 1885.

Even the North-West Mounted Police — the precursor to the RCMP — protested the system in 1893, with Commissioner Lawrence William Herchmer ordering members of the force to stop returning people without passes to the reserves.

“You know something is wrong when the cops say don’t do it,” Williams said in an interview.

Hayter Reed, who was then in charge of the Indian Affairs department, overruled the Mounties but acknowledged in a letter that year the pass system was not grounded in law.

“I beg to inform you that there has never been any legal authority for compelling Indians who leave their Reserves to return to them, but it has always been felt that it would be a great mistake in this matter to stand too strictly on the letter of the law,” Reed wrote June 15, 1893.

The system remained in effect, as evidenced by the passes shown in the film, but also by stories told by First Nations people who either experienced the pass system themselves, or the parallel permit system that controlled how people living on reserve could sell their agricultural products, or remember relatives talking about it.

One powerful testimony comes from Elder Therese Seesequasis, of Beardy’s and Okemasis First Nation, who recalls spending 10 months of the year away from her family at residential school.

“We sure spent some lonely, lonely days . . . Our parents didn’t even come for Christmas,” Seesequasis says.

The film notes the pass system helped support the residential school system as well, as Indian agents would often refuse to sign passes if they suspected they would be used to visit children there.

Winona Wheeler, an historian and professor of indigenous studies at the University of Saskatchewan who appears in the film, said in an interview that oral history is crucial to understanding what happened.

“I think without hearing those stories, a lot of stuff has been glossed over or hidden or has not surfaced in the public realm, because documents go missing or documents have not been made accessible in the archives,” says Wheeler, who drew a parallel to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission having to fight the government for access to archives on residential schools.

Williams said only two actual passes exist at Library and Archives Canada and he suspects many were deliberately destroyed by a government who knew what it was doing was illegal.

There is support for that assertion in a letter dated July 11, 1941 by Harold McGill, who was director of the Indian Affairs branch at the department of mines and resources.

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION  
INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH 69282  
PERMIT TO SELL

AGENCY Stechbrook DATE June 12/67  
NAME OF VENDOR Frank Peckham  
BAND Sandy Lake BAND No. 334  
RESERVE Sandy Lake  
IS HEREBY PERMITTED TO SELL THE UNDERMENTIONED ARTICLES  
WITHIN Five DAYS OF THE DATE SHOWN ABOVE.

1 2 yr Old heifer - red w/ white face

NOTE TO PURCHASER: (1) IF PAYMENT IS MADE DIRECTLY TO VENDOR COMPLETE AND SIGN ORIGINAL COPY AND RETURN IT TO AGENCY OFFICE SHOWN BELOW.  
(2) IF PAYMENT IS TO BE MADE TO AGENCY OFFICE FORWARD REMITTANCE AND ORIGINAL COPY OF PERMIT TO ADDRESS SHOWN BELOW.  
(3) RETAIN TRIPLICATE COPY FOR YOUR PROTECTION.

PAYMENT SHOULD BE MADE TO Vendor  
AGENCY P.O. ADDRESS Stechbrook THIS PERMIT AUTHORIZED BY Alma D. Egg SUPERINTENDENT  
AMOUNT OF THIS TRANSACTION \$ \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE OF PURCHASER \_\_\_\_\_  
POST OFFICE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

IA 5-97 DUPLICATE

The letter circulated to Indian agents put an official end to the pass system, saying there was no law compelling First Nations people to stay on their reserves and that they were “free to come and go” like everyone else.

McGill mentions government lawyers having come to that conclusion in 1900 — for which Williams could find no documentation — and also makes a request: “If you have any such forms in your possession kindly return them to the Department where they will be destroyed”.

Williams believes that, like the tragic and ongoing legacy of residential schools, Canada needs to come to grips with this part of our history, which most people would more comfortably assume was something that happened during South African apartheid.

“They have been fed a version of events that is, to put it politely, drastically incomplete of what was done in their name to secure the land for settlement,” said Williams, who argues the effects of these policies can still be seen today in the inequities between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

**Movement still restricted after policy ended**



Leona Blondeau, 82, remembers a very different life when she was growing up on George Gordon First Nation, Sask.

“We never went anywhere. We stayed on the reserve. We were very segregated . . . It was the way life was, I thought. I didn’t realize that wasn’t the right thing to do,” said Blondeau.

That was not entirely by choice as *The Pass System* depicts a little-discussed era of Canadian history that forbade First Nations people in the Prairies from leaving their reserves without signed permission from the local Indian agent.

Blondeau was 8 years old when the extralegal federal government policy was officially revoked in 1941, but she and other living witnesses to history recall restrictions on their movements lasting until at least her teenage years.

She remembers being 14 years old when she and her siblings — she was the eldest of six — came home from residential school for the summer and their mother took them to the closest town, Punnichy, Sask., for the day.

“We travelled by wagon and horse and go there and our treat was an ice cream cone. That was our treat for the day,” Blondeau recalled.

She says her mother had to get permission from the local Indian agent before she could create those memories with her children.

“They were like a receipt and you had to tell how long you were going away off the reserve and he signed them to give you his permission,” she said.

Blondeau remembers a happy childhood spent close to her family, but says that as she grew older she became angry and resentful at how limited her life and future appeared.

“Your life was finished at Grade 8. That was it,” she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/10/the-pass-system-explores-dark-chapter-in-canadian-history.html>

## Aboriginal Identity & Representation

### **Of the North film screening goes ahead despite petition from Inuit against it**

**Documentary is made from clips from internet sites including Youtube**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 10, 2016 8:45 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 11, 2016 3:00 PM ET





A still from the mashup film *Of the North* by Quebec director Dominic Gagnon. The film has been called 'racist' by some Inuit artists. (Dominic Gagnon)

A group of Quebec Inuit are trying to stop a controversial documentary from screening at future film festivals after a showing in New York City on Sunday.

*of the North* by Montreal filmmaker Dominic Gagnon has come under fire for its depiction of Inuit communities.

Made of video clips from various websites including YouTube, the film contains scenes of people appearing drunk and wrestling on the floor. To make the film, Gagnon says he drew from around 500 hours of footage of the circumpolar region and stitched it together at his computer in Montreal.

**A petition to have the film's screening cancelled** at the Museum of the Moving Image has garnered closed to 1,200 signatures.

"If this film is about Inuit, then why isn't he talking [with] Inuit? And why isn't he including Inuit in this conversation," asks Stephen Puskas, an Inuk man in Montreal.

In past interviews, Gagnon has countered that his critics are missing the point of the film. He said it is not about Inuit but about how people film themselves.

The screening went as planned at the museum, but with an acknowledgment that the film's extreme imagery is offensive to some viewers.

"We feel that the film has strong artistic merit and that its use of disturbing imagery is part of an artistic strategy designed to raise questions and challenge the viewer's assumptions," the museum said on its website.



"As a work of avant garde cinema constructed and compiled by Mr. Gagnon, the film does not claim to be a representative portrait of Inuit life."

Puskas said he will continue to pressure other film festivals to boycott the film, and to include minorities in public discussions about movies showing them.

*of the North* is scheduled to screen at a film festival in Naples in April.

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#### Clarifications

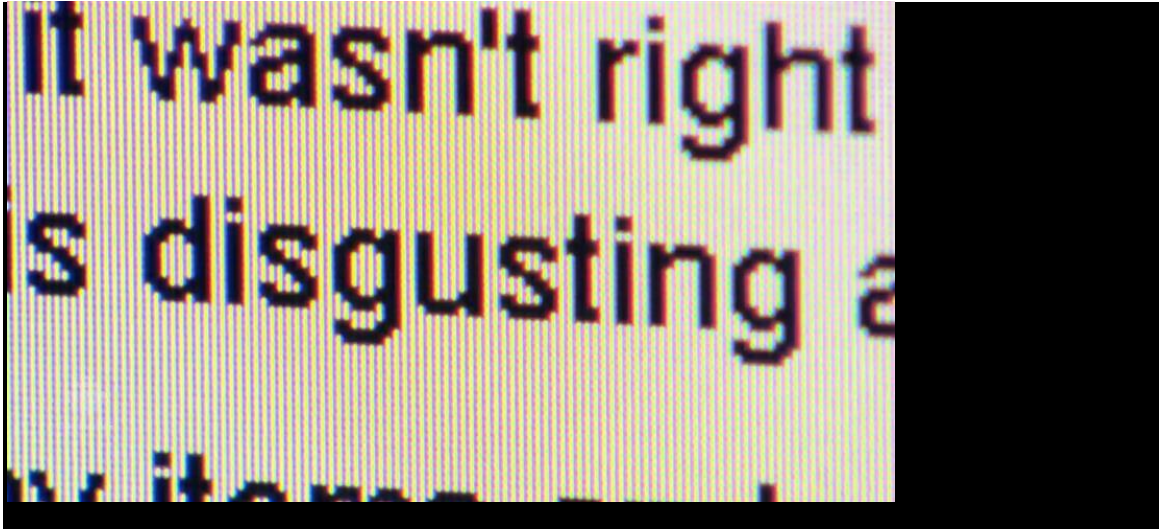
- An earlier version of this story said that the *of the North* film was made entirely of footage from Youtube. In fact, the footage came from various internet sites including Youtube.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/of-the-north-inuit-film-1.3397892>

## **First Nations leader questions why she was treated like a thief in Winnipeg store**

**MKO Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson says she was racially profiled and it's not the first time**

CBC News Posted: Jan 11, 2016 7:54 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 11, 2016 5:48 PM CT



A Manitoba chief is speaking out after she says she was racially profiled in a Winnipeg store.

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) grand chief Sheila North Wilson said she's experienced racism while shopping before. But on a recent trip to a St. James pharmacy, North Wilson said she was treated like a potential thief.

"I heard a lady on the intercom say, 'Security aisle five, security aisle five,' so I looked up and sure enough it says 'aisle five' and I'm the only one standing there," North Wilson said, adding she then approached management.



"I asked her, 'Why are you targeting me? Because I'm dressed like this? Because I have this face? Why did you decide that I needed to be checked on — to see if I was stealing anything?'"

North Wilson's trip to the pharmacy happened on Jan. 2. She said while she is still upset, she doesn't plan to disclose the store's location.

"I wanted to focus on the issue more than the stores, because if we target one store then it lets others off the hook," she said.

North Wilson said she thinks attitudes that lead to everyday-racism stem from deeply entrenched ignorance about indigenous people.

"People in Canadian society, in Winnipeg, in Manitoba grow up learning negative stereotypes about indigenous people and they don't bother to correct these stereotypes on their own as they become adults," she said.



"We see them in everyday situations carrying these stereotypes about indigenous people, and sometimes it comes boldly into your face and we all individually have to handle it."

North Wilson said she hopes her story encourages others to speak out and file formal complaints.

"It was important to me that they knew that they can't paint us all with the same brush," she said, adding she sees sharing her experience as a chance to fight racism.

"Anyone who's faced this sort of racial profiling needs to speak up if they can, when they can. If they can't do it verbally, they should write formal complaints, because the more we don't say anything, the more time it's going to take to educate the rest of the public."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nations-leader-questions-why-she-was-treated-like-a-thief-in-winnipeg-store-1.3398247>

## Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

# Relief comes to young indigenous family losing hope in homeless shelter

REID SOUTHWICK, CALGARY HERALD

Published on: January 11, 2016 | Last Updated: January 11, 2016 8:17 AM MST



Elijah Provost and his wife, Alexandra Catface, speak with reporters after listening to a speech by Dwight Dorey, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, at the Central Library in Calgary on Sunday, Jan. 10, 2015. The couple and their three children moved from the Piikani Nation reserve to find work and a new home in Calgary.

Elijah Provost and his wife Alexandra Catface moved their three young children off their southern Alberta reserve for the first time nearly three weeks ago because they couldn't find work or housing.

They moved from Brocket on the Piikani Nation to Calgary, where they remain in a homeless shelter. Both in their 20s, the parents have viewed seven apartments so far, but they've been shut down each time.

They don't have formal identification cards or credit histories, and they get the sense landlords profile them as a family unable to make rent for the long term.

"They see us and they see our children, and more or less they look at us like we're going to fail; we're only going to be there for a couple of months, but really we're not," Provost said.

The family's story has become all too familiar, aboriginal and homelessness officials say. Faced with Calgary's affordable housing shortage, indigenous families end up on the street or in shelters. Many are turned away by landlords because of racism, advocates say.

"You lose hope," Catface said.





Elijah Provost and his wife Alexandra Catface were photographed with their children Illyana, Dennis and Gracie after listening to a speech by Dwight Dorey, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, at the Central Library in Calgary on Sunday, Jan. 10, 2015. The family moved from the Piikani Nation reserve to find work and a new home in Calgary.

But the family may get some relief after a chance meeting Sunday afternoon.

Provost and Catface took their three children, aged one, four and six, to the Calgary Public Library downtown. The parents want to make sure their two eldest continue learning while out of school and preschool as the family makes the transition to urban life, so they visit the library every day.

On Sunday, they ended up sitting in on a presentation by Dwight Dorey, national chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, who was at the library as part of pan-Canadian consultations to learn about the experiences of off-reserve aboriginals.

Provost told Dorey he has a long work history, but jobs have dried up on the reserve. Now in Calgary, the family doesn't know where to turn.

Dorey praised Provost for his courage to press on in the face of incredible challenges, and vowed to take his story across the country as an example of the "basic, fundamental family needs our people are dealing with."

The chief also called on local social agencies to help the young family.



Dwight Dorey, National Chief with the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, speaks at the Central Library in Calgary on Sunday January 10, 2015.

Diana Krecsy, the president and chief executive of the Calgary Homeless Foundation who was in the crowd, told Provost she would set up meetings with people who can help him get ID and look for housing and work.

After she listened to Provost recall his struggles with landlords who appear to be unwilling to let his family move in, Krecsy told him, “Let’s call it like it is: it’s racism.”

“They’re fine on the phone until he shows up with his wife and three children and he’s an aboriginal man, and all of a sudden the place isn’t available anymore,” Krecsy later told reporters.

“These are common things that are happening for indigenous families that just want to raise healthy and thriving families in an urban site.”

Provost said he felt as though “a weight lifted off my shoulder, her approaching us and letting us know she’s going to help us.”

Dorey, whose national congress represents off-reserve aboriginal peoples, said there are shortages in housing, education and training for his members across the country. Once he finishes his national consultations, he will develop policies to address the gaps and urge government to take action.

“I know that’s one situation of many out there,” Dorey said of the young family’s story. “As I said to the young fellow, I applaud him. He shows lots of courage and strength.”

**Direct Link:** <http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/young-indigenous-family-losing-hope-in-homeless-shelter-may-get-some-relief>

## Aboriginal Jobs & Labour



# Five vie for VP jobs at Nunavik's birthright organization

**"No development will be sustainable if it doesn't benefit from local ideas"**

SARAH ROGERS, January 13, 2016 - 9:40 am



Markusi Qisiiq, currently a director at the KRG's department of renewable resources, is running for Makivik's executive for the first time. (HANDOUT PHOTO)



Andy Moorhouse is hoping to switch gears, from Makivik's corporate secretary to its VP economic development. (HANDOUT PHOTO)



Michael Gordon is hoping to serve a fourth term as vice-president at Makivik Corp. (HANDOUT PHOTO)

On Jan. 21, Nunavik Inuit will choose a corporate secretary and vice president of economic development for Makivik Corp., with five Nunavimmiut running for each position.

*Nunatsiaq News* reached out to all five VP candidates so they can tell readers what they intend to bring to the economic development vice president's job, a position that oversees programs and projects related to economic development in Nunavik and the corporation's business activities.

Makivik's current VP of economic development, **Michael Gordon**, is seeking re-election this year.

Gordon, from Kuujjuaq, is a graduate of McGill University in Montreal. A former mayor of Kuujjuaq from 1997 to 2005, Gordon was first elected to Makivik's executive in 2007. If re-elected Jan. 21, Gordon will serve a fourth term as VP.

The top three issues Gordon said he plans to address, if re-elected, include:

- Makivik executive salaries: These have risen above those paid at other Nunavik organizations, Gordon said. Makivik salaries should be in line with similar positions around the region. "I believe it is an honour to serve your people," he said.
- a review of what an Inuit business is, to prevent non-Inuit from taking advantage of the status.

"This has become more noticeable in the past couple of years," he said. "We have to encourage more legitimate Inuit enterprises without damaging the fledgling ones."

At the same time, Gordon said there should be less emphasis on ownership, and more focus on creating jobs for Inuit in the region.

- housing: Too many families are living in overcrowded homes and struggling with food insecurity. Makivik has had some success with the federal government on this file, Gordon said, but more must be done. The organization should foster traditional country food and non-traditional agro-food activities in the communities, he said.

Gordon said Makivik has taken a lead in promoting Parnasimautik, Nunavik's blueprint for future development, by working alongside regional and community organizations.

"I am ready for new daily challenges," Gordon said about his re-election bid. "I don't need to rely on Qallunaat advisors to do the work; at the same time [I'm] able to work with those from the South."

**Andy Moorhouse** resigned his position of corporate secretary last month, which he held since 2010, to run for VP of economic development at Nunavik's birthright organization.

Moorhouse began his career in politics at a young age; at 24, he was elected mayor of his hometown, Inukjuak, and later served as president of Saputiit Nunavik Youth Association.

As corporate secretary he also served as chairman of the Makivik-owned Air Inuit's board of directors.

The top three issues which Moorhouse said he plans to address, if elected, include:

- the creation of a Makivik-endorsed Inuit business directory, to help promote the services of regional enterprises. Moorhouse said he'd commit to having a draft of the directory completed within his first three months of his mandate, if elected, and updated annually;
- providing more support to Makivik's subsidiaries, which could use any support they can get, Moorhouse said. "With programs and services available to small businesses, this would allow Inuit business to be able to compete better in the competition market, and would allow new businesses to be supported as it starts off," Moorhouse said; and,
- reviews of Inuit businesses that have ceased operations to determine why these failed, and use that information to develop action plans to help other enterprises succeed.

Moving forward, Moorhouse said Nunavik's Parnasimautik document spells out the needs of each community in the region.

"It is now the responsibility of each organization along with Makivik to lobby and secure the needs of Nunavik communities," he said.

"I know I can make a difference, from what we have had in the last years, to promote and develop economic development in the region."

**Markusi Qisiiq**, originally from Kangiqsujaq, is now based in Kuujjuaq where he serves as director to the Kativik Regional Government's department of Renewable Resources, Environment, Lands and Parks.

Qisiiq has held a number of position, from president of the Nunarturlik Landholding Corp. to director of the Pingualuit provincial park.

Qisiiq, a first-time candidate for Makivik, said that, if elected, he would work for:

- recognition of the traditional Inuit economy, such as hunting, fishing, sewing and carving, by governments;
- an economic development action plan, which could help inform the development of Nunavik's traditional and non-traditional economy; and,

- revisions to the Hunter Support Program in Nunavik to deliver more benefits to hunters and fishermen.

“To me, no development will be sustainable if it doesn’t benefit from local ideas, support and dynamism,” Qisiiq said. “I believe that people working towards a better economy for Nunavik should take into account our values and our strengths.”

Makivik also needs to work with both the mining sector and governments to deliver more and better training in the region’s communities, he said.

‘We need to get better jobs in the mining sector, and be fairly paid for what we accomplish,’ said Qisiiq, a former employee at Nunavik’s Raglan nickel mine.

Qisiiq also called Nunavik’s housing shortage an opportunity to build an economic development project, by and for Nunavimmiut.

“We all know that our lack of housing is a source of multiple social problems,” he said. “I would involve Inuit in the improvement of housing design and conditions and make sure that we have as many Inuit workers on site as possible.”

Donald Edward Watt and George Peters, who are also running for Makivik’s vice president of economic development, did not respond to *Nunatsiaq News*’ request for information by press-time.

Polls open Jan. 21 in each community’s Northern Village office and at Makivik’s office in Montreal from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674five\\_vie\\_for\\_vp\\_job\\_at\\_nunaviks\\_bir\\_thright\\_organization/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674five_vie_for_vp_job_at_nunaviks_bir_thright_organization/)

## **Corporate secretary job at Nunavik org will go to newcomer**

**Incumbent Andy Moorhouse to run for Makivik VP position**

SARAH ROGERS, January 14, 2016 - 6:59 am



Laina Grey is from Kangirsuk, but now calls Montreal home. (HANDOUT PHOTO)



Charlie Tarkirk, with his seven-year-old daughter Elaisa. (HANDOUT PHOTO)





Adamie Padlayat is currently executive director at the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board in Inukjuak. (HANDOUT PHOTO)



Lizzie Epoo-York is a freelance interpreter based in Kuujjuaq. (HANDOUT PHOTO)

If there's a sure outcome to expect from Makivik Corp.'s upcoming elections, it's that the birthright organization will get a new corporate secretary Jan. 21.

That's because Andy Moorhouse, Makivik's corporate secretary since 2010, resigned from that position last month to run for another executive position: vice president of economic development.

That leaves the position open to a field of five newcomers who are vying for the job.

The corporate secretary has a number of duties: keeping Makivik's minute books and corporate records; giving all required notices; calling board meetings; and occasionally heading Makivik subsidiary companies when required.

*Nunatsiaq News* reached out to the candidates to ask them about what they plan to bring to the job, if elected.

Here are the candidates' responses:

**Laina Grey**, who was born and raised in Kangirsuk, now makes her home in Montreal. She's worked at Makivik's Montreal office since 2013, helping to coordinate the Parnasimautik consultations and the production of the new documentary *Napagunnaqullusi* (So That You Can Stand.)

"There are times in life when you just know you have to 'walk the talk'," Grey said about running in this election. "This is my time."

Grey offered her top three priorities for the role:

- better administration: As corporate secretary, Grey says her primary responsibility will be efficient administration, which includes "information sharing and transparency;"
- youth: Grey says she's committed to making youth a priority, supporting youth activities at the community level, and supporting youth to pursue higher education. She said she will offer support to the new Nunavik youth forum; and,
- Parnasimautik as a blueprint for Nunavik: Grey stresses Makivik's role — and her own, if elected — in leading the implementation process for the Parnasimautik, in collaboration with other regional organizations. "Nunavik leaders must work in unity and find ways to work with the governments to serve Inuit more effectively," she said.

**Jonathan Epoo**, originally from Inukjuak, is now based in Kuujuaq, where he works as a school bus driver. He worked previously as a liaison officer for Hydro Québec.

He's served as president of the Saputiit Youth Association and the National Inuit Youth Council, and as a youth representative to a number of regional organizations.

"I have always been passionate about my region, my people and our communities and felt I was ready to take on a greater challenge in my life," Epoo said.

If elected, he wants to see:

- action on Makivik's subsidiaries: Makivik draws strength through its subsidiary companies, Epoo said, and as such, should ensure those subsidiaries remain strong and profitable, "so as to invest back into our region's development and well-being;"
- review of policies and by-laws: Epoo would like to review Makivik's policies and by-laws to ensure accountability to the organization's beneficiaries;
- implementation of Parnasimautik: Makivik must work to implement the aspirations outlined in Parnasimautik, Epoo said, to address education and employment needs in the region, as well as health and social services, justice, housing and the high cost of living.

**Charlie Takirk** worked as an office manager for Makivik in Montreal until he decided to run for corporate secretary.



The trilingual candidate, born and raised in Salluit, studied social sciences and music at Collège Marie-Victorin.

“I’m spontaneous and driven and capable of organizing things,” Tarkirk said. “I am also determined to move forward with my people.

“I will serve my fellow Inuit, Inuuqatika, not because I deserve it, but because they deserve to be supported and protected.”

Tarkirk hopes, if elected, to push the birthright organization to act on a number of issues, even if they don’t fall directly within his mandate. These include:

- justice: Tarkirk would like to see Nunavik’s justice system reformed by and for Inuit in the region. He believes that would reduce the number of Nunavimmiut children taken from their homes and put into foster care;
- airlines: Tarkirk proposes changes to the way Makivik’s airlines operate. He wants to see Air Inuit provide its own cargo services rather than use contractors. Tarkirk also wants to shift the airline’s pilot training to Nunavik, to help more youth pursue careers in aviation;
- an increased profile for Makivik: Tarkirk wants Makivik to have a stronger presence in meetings with provincial and federal governments, to lobby for better cost-of-living subsidies and housing.

**Adamie Padlayat**, is executive director at the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, based in Inukjuak.

He’s usually on the administrative side of elections, as a former returning officer to Makivik elections and regional referendum director.

“This is the first time I’m campaigning,” he said. “And I believe that I could contribute in improving the lives of our beneficiaries of Nunavik.”

As an executive member of Makivik, Padlayat wants to see:

- a focus on Makivik’s relationship with Avataq Cultural Institute and Nunavik elders, to strengthen the region’s traditional and cultural values;
- solid wildlife management: “We need to make sure that this hunting, fishing and trapping continues and is not disturbed,” he said; and,
- a key role in Parnasimautik: Makivik should have a key role in moving ahead on goals outlined in the Parnasimautik report, particularly those that support youth development, education and training.

**Lizzie Epoo-York** is a freelance interpreter in Kuujjuaq, the community which she has called home for the last 40 years.

She has served as a board member and chair to both the Tulattavik health centre and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

“With all the knowledge I’ve stored over the years, I thought it was high time I used it to try and make a difference,” she said.

Epoo-York said her biggest motivation for running to serve as an executive member with Makivik comes from the chance to promote the recognition of Inuit rights.

“I’ve met people who think we live in igloos,” Epoo-York said. “I want Inuit recognized as any other Canadian. Sometimes that means human rights, which are not always extended to Inuit.”

She also wants to act on:

- housing: With more than half the population under 18 years of age, regional leadership must make plans to secure housing as the population ages and continues to grow, Epoo-York said.

“We’ve been doing nothing but catch-up on a lot of issues,” she said. “Makivik has been using their own funding to do things the government should be doing.”

- implementation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Commitments to the region laid out in JBNQA have yet to be met, Epoo-York said, weakening the agreement’s original goal; and,

- education: Education offered to Nunavimmiut is subpar, Epoo-York said. Inuit should have access to high-quality post-secondary training in their own communities.

Nearly 7,000 Nunavimmiut will be eligible to cast ballots Jan. 21 in the corporate secretary and vice president of economic development elections. Each of the successful candidates will serve a three-year term.

Polling stations will be set up in each community’s Northern Village office Jan. 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Nunavik Inuit in Montreal can also vote at Makivik’s Ville St-Laurent office during those same hours.

An advance poll will take place a week before the election, on Jan. 15, at all NV offices and Makivik’s Montreal office, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674corporate\\_secretary\\_job\\_at\\_nunavik\\_org\\_will\\_go\\_to\\_newcomer/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674corporate_secretary_job_at_nunavik_org_will_go_to_newcomer/)

## **Homeless Inuk man's selfless act caught on camera in Montreal**

**'Often, those who live on the street are people with really big hearts.'**

By Sarah Leavitt, CBC News Posted: Jan 13, 2016 6:27 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 14, 2016 1:14 PM ET



It was a selfless act: a homeless man spots an apparently homeless teenager asking for money and stops to give him the coat off his back.

Little did he know that he was being filmed the whole time.

Putulik Qumaq, originally from Cape Dorset in Nunavut, has been living on the streets of Montreal for 17 years.

So when he saw a teenager out in the cold, asking for money, he thought nothing of helping him out.

"It's very cold," Qumaq tells the teen, before taking off his jean jacket and handing it to the boy.

As it turns out, the teenager was not homeless and was taking part in a social experiment being filmed by his brother, Angel Azmeer.



Putulik Qumaq hands over his jean jacket to the teenager who was posing as homeless. (MTLCINEMA)

"We wanted to see what people would do if a 14-year-old took to the street asking for money," Azmeer said.

"Some gave a bit of money, but most people just ignored him. We were shocked that the one person to really help was homeless himself."

### **'I've been through all that'**

Qumaq says he didn't do anything special.

"It's cold. Like myself, I'm homeless too for all these years, but I had a feeling," he said.

"He's young and I've been through that."

### **'Brotherly love' among homeless**

Every day, Qumaq visits his friends at the Open Door — a Montreal shelter that provides daytime activities, food and clothing to those who need it most.

He's become a bit of a celebrity at the centre because of the video.

But volunteer Frank Paris said it wasn't surprising to hear what Qumaq did.

"I see them helping individuals all the time. Here, showing love, brotherly love amongst each other."

David Chapman, the assistant director at the Open Door, said those who have been through hardship are often the most generous.

"Often, those who live on the street are people with really big hearts, and this is an aspect that's often not seen," he said.

"We see a lot of it because we get to know them. We learn to know their names, we learn a little bit about their stories, and in fact, they are some of the most lovely people you'll ever meet."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/homeless-inuk-selfless-act-1.3402460>

## Aboriginal Politics

### Can Trudeau heal broken relationship with First Nations?: Goar

The new government has been sending the right signals to Canada's indigenous peoples, but it will take more than signs of good faith to repair the relationship

OurWindsor.Ca

By Carol Goar

Jan 08, 2016

Every prime minister for the past half century has vowed to improve the lives of Canada's indigenous people. Each has failed.

It wasn't for lack of effort. They set up royal commissions and inquiries. They held extensive consultations. They undertook tortuous land claims negotiations. They drafted modern legislation to replace the paternalistic Indian Act. They replaced decrepit housing and cleaned up polluted waterways. They spent billions of dollars. And they publicly apologized for pushing Canada's first inhabitants off their lands; stripping them of their livelihoods; mistreating their children in native residential schools; "scooping" their babies to live with white families; and ignoring their right to self-government. Yet Lester Pearson, Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper (Joe Clark, John Turner, Kim Campbell and Paul Martin weren't in office long enough to judge) all ended up estranged from aboriginal leaders.

Will Justin Trudeau break the cycle? Will he succeed in building a relationship based on mutual respect? Will he deliver "fairness and equality of opportunity for indigenous peoples"?

History suggests the odds are long. His predecessors began their mandates with goals as estimable as his. Like him, they genuinely wanted to right the wrongs of the past. Like him, they initially received a warm welcome from aboriginal leaders.

But there are subtle differences this time — differences that might turn the tide.

- For the first time, indigenous affairs is a top-tier ministry in Trudeau's cabinet. Until now, it has been a low-visibility portfolio for a rookie or a consolation prize for the last name left on the cabinet list.

- Unlike his predecessors, Trudeau appointed an 18-year veteran who sought the job. Carolyn Bennett had worked assiduously as an opposition MP to earn the trust of First Nations. She had become a familiar and trusted presence in many aboriginal communities.
  - The Liberal leader deliberately used the language of aboriginal leaders in his speeches and his campaign platform. Rather than talking about First Nations, Métis and Inuit, he spoke directly to them.
  - He began his tenure by acting on several long-standing aboriginal grievances. He announced an inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women. He lifted the 2 per cent cap on aboriginal funding. And he dropped the sanctions against bands that refused to comply with the Harper government's First Nations Financial Transparency Act.
  - He affirmed that his government's commitment to treat the constitutionally guaranteed rights of aboriginal peoples as a "sacred obligation."
- It will take more than these signs of good faith to build a productive long-term partnership between the Trudeau government and Canada's 1.5 million indigenous people. Money alone won't do it. Neither will legislation or negotiation.

The Liberals will have to accept — and convince the public to accept — a more inclusive vision of Canada that accommodates indigenous self-government. That will require a departure from the long-standing principle that there is one central government with the authority to speak for all Canadians, one justice system (delivered by the provinces and territories), one standard for education from coast to coast and uniform accountability rules for all recipients of public funds.

They will have to show enormous patience as aboriginal leaders heal the divisions in their ranks and build a consensus to move together. A four-year mandate may only be enough time to lay the groundwork, as Trudeau acknowledged in an address to the Assembly of First Nations last month.

Finally, Ottawa will have to collaborate more effectively with the provinces and territories than it has done in the past. They have jurisdiction over resource development, allocating infrastructure funds, training teachers, upgrading roads and housing and delivering non-stigmatizing social programs.

"October 19 was a special day for us," said Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, who had never voted in a federal election until then. "We embraced the concept of dual citizenship. Huge numbers (of aboriginal voters) turned out in 50 key ridings."

The result: a record 10 indigenous MPs in Canada's current Parliament, (eight Liberals and two New Democrats) and two ministers in Trudeau's first cabinet.

"It's very powerful to see that," Bellegarde said. "There is a warm wind of hope and change blowing across the land."

Trudeau's task is to convert that hope into unstoppable momentum.

***Toronto Star***

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ourwindsor.ca/opinion-story/6225245-can-trudeau-heal-broken-relationship-with-first-nations-goar/>

# BLACK: Flexibility best policy, from refugees to First Nations

**BILL BLACK**

Published January 8, 2016 - 3:06pm



James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, holds a press conference in Ottawa in 2013. He presented his preliminary observations and recommendations on the situation of indigenous peoples in Canada. (SEAN KILPATRICK / CP)

The Syrian refugee program looks like it is going to be a success, at least in part because the Liberals are not doing it the way they promised. That willingness to adapt to reality needs to be applied in other areas.

The federal government's Syrian refugee website (#WelcomeRefugees) does a great job of showing the progress.

The "Milestones and key figures" section provides a continuously updated and commendably transparent set of data showing how many refugees have arrived or are in process.

It also shows how many refugees are arriving on each government-chartered flight and the communities to which they are headed across Canada.

The flight data shows a gathering momentum. The flights, each holding up to 300 passengers, land in Montreal or Toronto for initial processing. There were just seven before Christmas, but then the pace picked up, with 14 more arriving before the end of the year. After a pause over the New Year's weekend, it has picked up again to two or three flights a day.

The Liberals originally promised 25,000 government-sponsored refugees by the end of 2015, then backed off to 10,000. They did not come close. The actual number was 2,439. This was in addition to more than 3,400 privately sponsored refugees, a number anticipated to grow to 10,000.

At the current pace of flight arrivals, the numbers can be expected to grow rapidly to a total of perhaps 35,000 by the end of February. This would meet the government's most recently revised target.



It also reflects an impressive effort by the various departments to inspect, validate, process, transport and receive such substantial numbers on a daily basis. As a practical matter, it is doubtful that many of the receiving communities could absorb a much more rapid flow.

That is not a problem in Nova Scotia. Through Jan. 7, we have received 123 via government charters, compared to other smaller provinces such as New Brunswick with 149 and Saskatchewan with 364.

The provincial government's goal of 750 to 1,500 (including privately sponsored) is too modest. Our proportionate share of 35,000 would be about 1,000, and we need to do better than our proportionate share. Our goal should be at least 2,000, and more than that if communities continue to be enthusiastic recipients.

As for the federal government, it can without embarrassment declare the operation a success. Canadians have rallied around this project. Being a couple of months late doesn't matter. The general idea was good and implementation is proceeding smoothly, so let's not sweat the details.

It is to be fervently hoped that some other campaign commitments will be treated as high-level direction rather than a precise formula.

First on the list is the evolving promise concerning the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Trudeau's initial response in June was to "affirm our unwavering support for the TRC's recommendations, and call on the Government of Canada to take immediate action to implement them."

By the time the Liberal platform was written, someone had noticed that many of the recommendations involved other levels of government, so the promise was amended to say working alongside them.

When the final report was released in December, they also noticed that the recommendations required actions from yet other parties such as health-care providers, universities, churches and the corporate sector. So "other vital partners" were added to the list to be worked with.

Many of the recommendations represent valuable steps in support of better health, education, economic outcomes and justice for indigenous communities. But some of the proposals need serious scrutiny. Canadians are supportive of better outcomes for our indigenous peoples but many may feel they did not vote to, for example:

- "repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples." Does that mean that Canadian sovereignty, which was passed on to us by Britain, is also repudiated?
- agree that "Aboriginal title claims are accepted once the Aboriginal claimant has established occupation over a particular territory at a particular point in time."

- establish a statutory holiday for Truth and Reconciliation.
- add to the Oath of Citizenship to read "...I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples ..."

Hopefully, the prime minister will, in accordance with one of his many other promises, allow full and meaningful parliamentary scrutiny of these and other undertakings.

Most troubling is the undertaking, repeated in December, to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This is a can of worms. When it was adopted in 2007, the declaration was opposed by Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, the main countries that would actually have to deal with its implications.

Its provisions assert indigenous rights to, among other things:

- "self-determination ... including the right to determine political status." Does this mean that the Cree can vote to separate all of northern Quebec from Canada?
- ways and means to finance these autonomous functions, presumably from non-indigenous Canadians.
- be consulted through their institutions in order to obtain their "informed consent before adopting legislative or administrative measures that may affect them." Doesn't that include most provincial and federal legislation? Does it effectively create an additional legislative chamber?
- own lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise acquired, and be compensated for any lands "traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been taken, occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent."

Since First Nations bands have claimed more than 100 per cent of British Columbia, that would seem to mean that all of it would have to be bought back. Pretty tough when almost nobody can afford a single house in Vancouver.

A comprehensive program to improve the lives of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit citizens is a good goal. It should be done in a way that Canadians will support. The Truth and Reconciliation report provides a good starting point, but not a definitive roadmap.

**Direct Link:** <http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/1331744-black-flexibility-best-policy-from-refugees-to-first-nations>

## Aboriginal Sports

## Joe Juneau heads hockey program for Inuit children



After 161 games in Boston over two-plus seasons, Joe Juneau was traded to Washington, a deal, he said, that brought him to tears.

**By Kevin Paul Dupont GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 09, 2016**

Joe Juneau's post-NHL life is focused on life skills, helping to teach kids in far northern Quebec, the vast Arctic, and subarctic territory known as Nunavik (translation: "Great Land"), how to play hockey, get along in the world.

Oh, Nunavik is a different place, just as Juneau, like all wingers, is a bit off center. Delightfully and impressively so.

"There's polar bears in Nunavik," the former Bruin said matter-of-factly, as if the furry white behemoths were merely snow squirrels. "I'll go on Facebook sometimes, and I'll see one of our pee-wee hockey players with a rifle, standing next to a polar bear he's just killed. It's really something else."



Tuniqu Berthe, from Tasiujaq, has been in the program for eight years now. This photo was taken a couple years ago when he was the Nunavik PeeWee Nordiks team captain. He is now a second-year Bantam and the team captain.

All righty then, best we explain what Juneau, who turned 48 last week, is up to these days. First, on Friday, he will be in San Antonio to receive one of the six NCAA Silver Anniversary Awards bestowed on distinguished student-athletes who are 25 years out of college. Former NBA All-Star, and Georgetown graduate, Dikembe Mutombo also will be among the recipients. We too easily forget that the NCAA, despite its many calamities and contradictions, gets some things very right.

Juneau, who grew up just outside of Quebec City, came to RPI in the fall of 1987 and earned his degree in aeronautical engineering by the spring of 1990. Difficult stuff. All the more arduous for a 19-year-old kid, who grew up speaking only French in his hometown of Pont-Rouge, Quebec, to land in Troy, N.Y., and crack open books that would be hard for 99.76 percent of English-speaking students to decipher.

Juneau had to learn both a new language and the air-speed velocity of an unladen swallow all in one fell swoop.

“I don’t know if that’s impressive,” mused Juneau some 30 years after the genesis of those growing pains. “I think it might be more like stupid. I think back at that, and I think, ‘What the [expletive] was I doing?’ ”

Juneau failed his first two exams at RPI, prompting him to consider packing up his skates, ditching the books, and heading home. Instead, he found help, tutors who steered him through verb conjugation and statistical analysis, and day by day he acquired a regimented scholarly discipline to form the steppingstones of academic success.

“I had to become very, very organized,” he recalled, “and, with a lot of help from a lot of people, I got through it.”

Juneau earned his degree, went on to a highly successful NHL career, and while he’s not a practicing engineer, he owns his own bush plane and frequently pilots it around northern Quebec in the summers, landing near whatever fishing hole catches his eye.

“I love flying,” he said, “but what I love most is to have the plane and to get out to the country, to get out to the woods and the mountains.”

A little more than 10 years ago, his NHL career having ended in the spring of 2004, it was the urge to get away with his wife, Elsa, and two friends that led Juneau to Nunavik, the tundra roughly the size of California and with a total population of less than 13,000. There are only 14 villages in all of Nunavik, most near seacoast, ranging in population of fewer than 200 (Aupaluk) to somewhere under 2,500 (Kuuujuaq).

Juneau was immediately taken by the land and its people, predominantly Inuits, the indigenous people who lived primarily in igloos until the early 20th century. He was also struck by the fact that the villages, many with indoor skating rinks, were without hockey programs. Kids played the game, but mostly outdoors, basically street hockey, with no adult supervision.

“Some villages would have a few kids playing, but it was always the same kids, the most privileged,” Juneau recalled. “It would be the mayor’s son, and a few friends who had parents with jobs and money, and that was about it. No coaching. So kids would always be by themselves.”

In a matter of months, working with community leaders eager for their children to play an organized sport, Juneau began the Nunavik Youth Hockey Development Program. He and Elsa moved to Nunavik with their two girls, Heloise and Ophelie, for two years, with Joe pulling together the sundry nuts and bolts necessary to shape a youth program. Elsa home-schooled the girls.

When the program was fully up and running, the Juneaus moved back near Quebec City, and to this day Joe’s full-time career is administering the program, darting back to Nunavik a few times each year when necessary. Meanwhile, he has begun a similar pilot program in Pont-Rouge, using organized hockey to keep kids focused, on the right track. He hopes to expand the model throughout all Quebec.

Part of the impetus in beginning the Nunavik program, noted Juneau, is the region’s high rate of suicide in a society where life expectancy is only age 60. “It’s the No. 1 killer,” he said.

According to the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society, an Inuit in his or her late teens is 25 times more likely to commit suicide than a teenager elsewhere in Quebec. The hockey program Juneau implemented there has kids in classrooms, matching every minute on the

ice with a minute of life studies, some of that book work focused on simply staying happy, healthy, alive.

Each year, said Juneau, upward of 600 children participate in the program. Over the 10 years, he figures some 1,200 kids, roughly 10 percent of Nunavik's total population, has laced 'em up. Some of the former players are now young adult coaches and they bring upward of 80 kids, boys and girls, to tournaments in and around Quebec City and Ottawa each season. A key to the success, he said, is not putting the Inuit children in tournaments in which they'll be overmatched.

"Because of the suicide rates," noted Juneau, "what we don't want to do is put kids on the ice in situations where they just get their [butt] kicked and they get out of there with self-esteem down to the floor."

One in a string of talented forwards ushered too quickly off Causeway Street, Juneau's time with the Bruins was short. A dynamic young scorer upon arriving from the 1992 Olympics, he rolled up 102 points in his rookie season (1992-93) and was gone by the following spring, dished to the Capitals at the trade deadline for the undeniable force that was Al "The Planet" Iafate.

"I was in tears," Juneau recalled while at the Quebec City airport on Thursday, a fresh bunch of Nunavik players about to arrive for a tourney. "I just wanted to be in Boston all my life, all my career. I was attached to it. I loved the city. I loved the fans. I loved the whole thing about it.

"Then you find out you're traded and you are moving on. It's very difficult, but you have to move on."

More than 20 years later, Joe Juneau has moved on, to an area almost too big to imagine. To a place where polar bears roam, a place where some Inuit children cling to life with the promise of another workout, another hockey game, another day.

*Kevin Paul Dupont's "On Second Thought" appears regularly in the Sunday Globe Sports section. He can be reached at [dupont@globe.com](mailto:dupont@globe.com). Follow him on [Twitter@GlobeKPD](#).*

**Direct Link:** <https://www.bostonglobe.com/sports/2016/01/09/joe-juneau-heads-hockey-program-for-inuit-children/IbEnlXfme7cysBifOsiF9I/story.html>

## **University of Winnipeg Wesmen acknowledge, honour indigenous culture**

**'It just makes me proud to be indigenous and playing in the game,'  
said Skylar Boulanger, a Wesman athlete**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 09, 2016 7:31 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 09, 2016 7:31 PM CT



Throughout the women's and men's games against the Brandon University Bobcats, indigenous culture was celebrated through traditional song and dance. (CBC)

University of Winnipeg Wesmen athletes honoured indigenous culture on Saturday by starting a basketball game with a traditional prayer and smudge by an elder.

It was all in an effort to build a relationship between the university's indigenous student body and the athletics department.

The women's and men's Wesmen teams took on the Brandon Bobcats in back-to-back games, which included dance and song by some of Canada's Indigenous Peoples.

Skylar Boulanger plays on the women's team at the University of Winnipeg and she told CBC it's the first time she's seen indigenous culture being honoured in sports at the school.



Skylar Boulanger said as a youth, she was told "no" a number of times, but she persisted until she reached her goal of becoming a Wesmen athlete at the University of Winnipeg. She wants indigenous youth to do the same by following their dreams. (CBC)

"It just makes me proud to be indigenous and playing in the game," she said.



Boulanger said the participation of the university's Aboriginal Student Services Centre and sports programming is important on a systemic level, outside of the impact Saturday's game had on her personally.

"I think it's important because it builds a strong relationship between the centre and the sports program," she said, noting she goes to the student centre on a daily basis to study.

"It's really neat to see the University of Winnipeg sports centre and the aboriginal centre connected because it opens up opportunities for aboriginal youth also to get involved in sports."

While Boulanger said she has not personally faced challenges as an indigenous youth in university sports, her message for fellow indigenous youth is to persist in the face of obstacles.

"When I was a young girl, my parents used to always take me to watch Wesmen games and I just remember coming down and getting Wesmen players' autographs all the time," she said.

"It just makes me proud that I was able to follow my dream of becoming a university player, and I just want you guys, aboriginal youth, to know always follow your dreams, no matter how many times you're told no."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/university-of-winnipeg-wesmen-acknowledge-honour-indigenous-culture-1.3397322>

## Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

### No set time for First Nations to finish Ajax review

By: [Cam Fortems](#)



Skeetchestn Indian Band Chief Ron Ignace

Two Shuswap bands conducting independent hearings into the application by KGHM Ajax “won’t be hurried” by external pressure from the corporation or government, said a band chief.

In an interview, Skeetchestn Indian Band Chief Ron Ignace gave some indication of the process Stk’emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) will use to determine impacts of the proposed open-pit copper mine immediately south of Kamloops.

The group is conducting the process to defend its rights and because the federal government refused to convene a panel review consisting of independent commissioners who convene witnesses in public hearings.

“We’ve developed a robust process that takes into understanding the needs of our people . . . laws, traditions, uses and stories specific to the area in question,” Ignace said.

SSN is comprised of Skeetchestn and Tk’emlups Indian bands.

In 2008, a related entity signed a deal with New Gold Inc. for revenue sharing from the New Afton Mine west of Kamloops, as well as participation by First Nations in employment and contracting opportunities.

The provincial Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) requires KGHM Ajax to co-operate in the SNS process.

Ignace said all involved — KGHM Ajax and the federal and provincial governments — have been supportive.

Ignace declined to provide dates or precise details of the SNS process and how it will differ from the harmonized federal-provincial comprehensive environmental assessment. He did say SNS will interview First Nations families and experts.

What will result, he said, is “our view of the overall impact of that type of development on us and the land and surrounding area, including the City of Kamloops.”

A report will detail the mine’s potential impact on human health, air, water, the economy and social factors.

Ignace also declined to say whether the report will be issued with a “yes” or “no” recommendation.

But, both he and former TIB chief Shane Gottfriedson said last year the project cannot proceed without First Nations’ approval.

The mining properties south of Aberdeen are privately held by KGHM Ajax, but the bands are suing in B.C. Supreme Court for title to the area around the historic Ajax pit and Jacko Lake.

While a 180-day timeline for government decisions will be triggered once the province and federal government accept KGHM Ajax’s application, Ignace said SSN will set its own schedule.

“We’re not operating on Ajax’s or the provincial government’s timeline,” he said. “They have to take into consideration our timelines and processes.”

KGHM Ajax has planned to submit its application on Jan. 4, but that has been delayed to give SSN more time to conduct its review.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.kamloopsthisweek.com/no-set-time-for-first-nations-to-finish-ajax-review/>

# Grand Chief Stewart Phillip calls for independent First Nations testing of fish farms

by Charlie Smith on January 7th, 2016 at 3:12 PM



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip worries about the impact of the ISA virus on wild salmon stocks. YOLANDE COLE

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The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs has urged the federal government to take action following a report of a new infectious salmon virus in B.C.

Six researchers, including fish-farm critic Alexandra Morton, reported in *Virology Journal* today that they have detected infectious salmon anaemia virus sequences in fish from B.C. It's the first time this information has been published.

"The disease infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) is arguably the most feared viral disease of the marine farmed salmon industry because it has continued to cause the Atlantic salmon farming industry severe economic losses in an increasing number of countries for the past 30 years," the researchers wrote.

In a subsequent news release, the UBCIC stated that there's a risk of this virus spreading to wild salmon stocks. It noted that a European strain has been detected in Fraser River sockeye that spawn in Cultus Lake.

"With the newly released research, we have the opportunity to stop the ISA virus before it causes incalculable damage to wild salmon," UBCIC president Grand Chief Stewart Phillip said. "UBCIC calls for the opening of fish farms to independent First Nations testing."

The UBCIC noted that the study "represents a window of opportunity for the newly elected Trudeau government to take concrete steps to protect our wild salmon and rebuild the trust and respect that was lost under the Harper regime".

UBCIC vice president Chief Bob Chamberlain pointed out in the news release that wild-salmon stocks are "integral to many First Nations' cultures, well being and livelihood".

The new fisheries minister, Hunter Tootoo, is of Inuk ancestry and represents the riding of Nunavut in Parliament.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/news/610611/grand-chief-stewart-phillip-calls-independent-first-nations-testing-fish-farms>

## **Beluga protection plan must include Inuit input, says Nunavut Tunngavik**

**Arviat HTO supports Manitoba's plan to monitor beluga whale population near Churchill**

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 12, 2016 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 12, 2016 4:00 AM CT



Hunters say beluga populations in Nunavut are stable, but they are seeing more evidence of predation by killer whales and polar bears. (Pew Charitable Trusts' Oceans North Canada)

People in Nunavut say they will be keeping a close eye on Manitoba's plan to protect beluga whales near its coastline on western Hudson Bay.

**The plan released on Friday** includes numerous recommendations, from co-ordinating how ships move in the belugas' habitat to studying pollution levels in the Churchill area.

Nunavut Tunngavik said any discussions on protection for marine areas, including beluga habitat, should be done in partnership with Inuit.

"The regional wildlife board and the HTOs definitely have to be involved in the discussions because they know their area very well and they are critical to any management system in place," said Paul Irngaut, director of wildlife and environment for Nunavut Tunngavik.



'Beluga are an ice-dependent species, and the whole ecosystem depends, in terms of productivity on the ice edge,' said Paul Crowley the Vice President Arctic of WWF-Canada. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Hunters say beluga populations in Nunavut are stable, but they are seeing more evidence of predation by killer whales and polar bears. Manitoba's protection plan includes monitoring the whales to find out if there are any concerns.

"It would be a good information for the science and also for Inuit," said Alex Ishalook, president of the Arviat Hunters and Trapper Organization.

Paul Crowley, director of WWF-Canada's Arctic Program, said the Government of Manitoba's plan is an exciting opportunity to start moving toward the goal of five per cent marine protected areas by 2017 and 10 per cent by 2020 as promised by the federal government.

"Protecting the nursery in Manitoba is really important because those whales end up in Nunavut and Nunavik the rest of the year," he said.

"It's important to not only protect where they're born but also protect where they migrate through, and so this is a really good first step."

## Melting sea ice may be a factor

Environmental groups say when thinking of protecting animal habitat, it's important to take into account climate change.

"Beluga are an ice-dependent species, and the whole ecosystem depends, in terms of productivity, on the ice edge," said Crowley.



'Often times when people think about preservation of a species they think it's only important to manage the harvest,' said Trevor Taylor the fisheries policy director with Oceans North. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

The melting of sea ice may open the Arctic to more large ship traffic, an issue flagged as a threat to belugas in Manitoba.

"As the ice conditions change, we really will need to protect those areas that are most important not only now but also in the future," added Crowley.

Beluga is part of the Inuit diet, and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board monitors the harvest.

But Trevor Taylor, the fisheries policy director with Oceans North, said loss of habitat is seen as a bigger threat to the beluga population.

"Often times when people think about preservation of a species they think it's only important to manage the harvest," he said.

"That is an important piece but more often than not habitat loss is what comprises a species' ability to reproduce."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/beluga-protection-plan-must-include-inuit-input-says-nunavut-tunngavik-1.3399167>

## Climate change projected to harm First Nations fisheries

January 13, 2016. 11:33 am • Section: [The Green Man](#)





Posted by:  
[Randy Shore](#)

Climate change could cut first nations' fisheries catch by up to 50 per cent, according to a new study from the University of British Columbia.

Lauren Weatherdon and her colleagues at UBC's Institute for Oceans and Fisheries modelled how different climate change scenarios would affect the health of 98 culturally and commercially important species of finfish and shellfish and estimated the impact on indigenous communities.

The study, published in the online journal PLOS ONE, found that coastal first nations stand to lose between \$6.7 million and \$12 million annually by 2050.

"Climate change is likely to lead to declines in herring and salmon, which are among the most important species commercially, culturally, and nutritionally for First Nations," said Weatherdon, who conducted the study as a graduate student. "This could have large implications for communities who have been harvesting these fish and shellfish for millennia."

The researchers modelled the impacts of two possible scenarios, a low-emission model based on an increase in sea surface temperature of 0.5 C and a high-emission scenario, based on a one degree Celsius rise.

The effects of climate change — temperature and oxygen availability — are projected to push suitable habitat for many species toward the poles and cooler water by 10.3 to 18 kilometres per decade.

"The shifts in the distributions of these stocks are quite important because First Nations are generally confined to their traditional territories when fishing for food, social, and ceremonial purposes," said Weatherdon, now a researcher at United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

First nations communities in the southern-most reaches of B.C. would be most severely affected, she said.



**Direct Link:** <http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2016/01/13/climate-change-projected-to-harm-first-nations-fisheries/>

## **Net loss: First Nations fisheries threatened by climate change, study says**



First Nations fishermen are shown setting a reef net in this undated handout photo. (Saanich First Nation / THE CANADIAN PRESS / HO)

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Graham Slaughter, CTVNews.ca Staff  
Published Wednesday, January 13, 2016 5:31PM EST

First Nations communities that have fished along Canada's Pacific coast for thousands of years could have their catches nearly cut in half by 2050, according to a new study conducted at the University of British Columbia.

As climate change continues to heat up ocean temperatures, researchers predict that fish living in Canadian waters could respond by moving north to chillier habitats.

Researchers say increased sea surface temperatures are likely to affect 98 fish and shellfish species that First Nations groups rely on for food and jobs. The price tag for such a loss is estimated to be between \$6.7 and \$12 million per year by 2050, according to the study.



A spawning sockeye salmon is seen making its way up the Adams River in Roderick Haig-Brown Provincial Park near Chase, B.C. on Oct. 4, 2011. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jonathan Hayward)



Fishing boats line the shoreline at Lutsel K'e, a Dene community of 350 people on Great Slave Lake in the boreal forest region of Canada's Northwest Territories in a June 2014 handout photo. (Sheldon Alberts / THE CANADIAN PRESS / HO)

“This could have large implications for communities who have been harvesting these fish and shellfish for millennia,” said UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre scientist Lauren Weatherdon, who conducted the study as a UBC graduate student, in a statement. The study was published Wednesday in PLOS ONE, a peer-reviewed science journal, and was conducted by a research team with the Nereus Program, an international group of scientists at UBC’s Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries.

The study examined two possible scenarios for rising sea-surface temperatures -- a low-balled projection (0.5 degrees Celsius by 2050) and a higher projection (1 degree Celsius by 2050) -- and mapped out models of how fish would likely respond.

In the low estimate, researchers say fish would move towards polar waters at an average rate of 10.3 kilometres per decade. In the higher estimate, fish would relocate at an average rate of 18 kilometres per decade, the study says.

The findings are significant because First Nations groups are “generally confined to their traditional territories when fishing for food, social, and ceremonial purposes,” Weatherdon said.

Herring are expected to be among the hardest-hit species, with researchers predicting catches reduced up to 49 per cent by 2050. For salmon, catches are expected to decrease as much as 29 per cent by 2050.

Researchers say that all First Nations communities are expected to be affected by rising sea temperatures, but groups living in southern B.C., such as the Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth First Nations, are expected to be the “most severely affected.”

Governments across the world have expressed commitments to curb global warming. Last December, all 195 countries participating in the United Nations climate change summit agreed to keep global warming “well below” 2 C while striving to limit them to 1.5 C instead.

And while the Paris Agreement acknowledged the concerns of First Nations people, study co-author Yoshitaka Ota said that “little is known about the impacts of climate change on coastal indigenous people.”

The study hopes to fill in that knowledge gap and provide accurate figures as to the future of coastal fishing for First Nations.

If the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement are met, researchers say the consequences to First Nations could be mitigated.

“Limiting global warming effectively to 1.5 C by the end of the 21st century, as represented by the low emission scenario considered by our study, can substantially reduce such impacts,” said co-author and UBC associate professor William Cheung in a statement.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/net-loss-first-nations-fisheries-threatened-by-climate-change-study-says-1.2736220>

## Northwest energy plan will supply First Nations, industry



From left, MPP Bill Mauro, and Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli, seated, learn about an Ontario Power Generating control room with Stephen Smith, a hydroelectric operating technician at the Burwood Road control centre. Chiarelli took part in a tour of the facility and saw how OPG operates its hydroelectric fleet in Northwestern Ontario.

Posted: Thursday, January 14, 2016 11:28 am | Updated: 11:13 am, Fri Jan 15, 2016.

BY SANDI KRASOWSKI THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

A plan to provide up to 26 remote Northern Ontario communities with electrical power is becoming a reality.

Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli spent Wednesday morning touring the Ontario Power Generation control centre in Thunder Bay and spoke about the power initiatives underway for the North. He referred to the 2013 long-term energy plan, which projected \$2.6 billion in supply, transmission and generation of power for Northwestern Ontario and said what will be "transformational" is the partnerships that will be formed between the private sector and First Nations.

"That's the way to go in the future - engaging First Nations and bringing together partnerships. We are very excited about that," he said.

Chiarelli projects a five- to six-year process that involves getting approval from the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), putting the funding in place and building the transmission lines.

"In this day and age, to have those communities still on dirty, expensive diesel is unacceptable," he said.

Chiarelli also spoke about the future of Ontario Power Generation, emphasizing that clean, emission-free energy is the way to go.

He said the refurbishing of the Darlington nuclear plant and the extension of the Pickering plant is good for the economy and there will be "thousands" of jobs created by that initiative.

Chiarelli said there is a long-term future for nuclear power.

"It's reliable, it's got an impeccable record of service and safety as well," he said.

The Ontario Power Generator operation in Thunder Bay helps to manage 11 power stations and generates \$80 million for the local economy.

"It's very significant for the economy and it's certainly very strategic now for clean, reliable energy. Water power and nuclear power are clean and it has to be that way in the future because of the challenges of carbon," he said.

Last year the auditor general slammed the decision to convert Thunder Bay's OPG power plant to biomass wood pellets. But the transition occurred for a few million dollars ensuring the plant remained open as a "peaking" plant for reserve energy.

"You have to be ready for the highest level of demand that can happen at anytime," said Chiarelli. "I was very pleased to see that the Northwest task force on energy supported the decision we made and responded to the auditor general's report saying that it was the right decision for us to have made."

As for challenges ahead, Chiarelli said they are manageable.

"Power is directly connected to the economy and it's very important that we have sufficient power generation, supply and capacity in Northwestern Ontario for pulp and paper and mining," he said.

Although the commodities market is hurting, Chiarelli says the level of investment in the mining sector has been dramatic.

"We have to be very closely connected with the industry to make sure they will have power when and where they need it."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/northwest-energy-plan-will-supply-first-nations-industry/article\\_e45f7d70-badb-11e5-a2d2-13755b5f2fe4.html](http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/northwest-energy-plan-will-supply-first-nations-industry/article_e45f7d70-badb-11e5-a2d2-13755b5f2fe4.html)

## **Land Claims & Treaty Rights**

### **Mathias Colomb Cree Nation makes offer to buy Port of Churchill**

**Northern Manitoba First Nation invites others to join ownership consortium**

CBC News Posted: Jan 08, 2016 4:19 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 08, 2016 4:19 PM CT



The Port of Churchill is Canada's only Arctic seaport, located on the west coast of Hudson Bay. Denver-based OmniTrax had operated the Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay rail line since 1997. (Cameron Macintosh/CBC)

A northern Manitoba First Nation says it has made an offer to purchase the Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay rail line from OmniTrax Canada.

The Mathias Colomb Cree Nation says it's inviting other northern First Nations to join a consortium that would own the port and rail line, which are being sold by the Denver-based company.

In a news release issued Friday, the First Nation calls its bid a "historic deal" that "will provide substantial benefits to First Nations and Manitobans alike."

"The Port of Churchill will offer First Nations a tremendous opportunity for additional outside investment and to increase the economic opportunities for all, while at the same time taking a lead role in ensuring the protection of the lands, waters, plants and animals on which these assets sit," Mathias Colomb Chief Arlen Dumas said in the release.

OmniTrax Canada had **announced in December** that it accepted a letter of intent to buy the port and rail line from a northern Manitoba First Nation group, but it did not say which First Nation was involved.

On Friday, company president Merv Tweed said OmniTrax supports the bid by Dumas and the Mathias Colomb council to buy the port and rail line.

"It is a pleasure working with Chief Dumas and his council. Their leadership, consideration and thoughtfulness have allowed us to support this opportunity for Mathias Colomb and partner northern First Nations who decide to join the consortium," Tweed said in the news release.

"He has taken bold steps to prove his commitment to the transaction and we are eager to see it come to fruition in the coming months."

The First Nation added that buying the rail line will help preserve services for communities along the rail line and bolster the role of the port and line as a transportation hub in Canada's North.

Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, the organization that represents many northern Manitoba First Nations, called the port and rail line "a lifeline to many people and essential to our northern region."

More details on the deal and partnerships are expected to be released soon.

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation is based in Pukatawagan, Man., which is about 700 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg by air and 545 kilometres southwest of Churchill.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/mathias-colomb-omnitrax-port-churchill-1.3396389>

## Ontario First Nation takes Line 9 pipeline fight to Supreme Court

The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation argues it wasn't consulted properly over the aging pipeline that runs through its traditional territory.



Construction of the Line 9 gas pipeline near the Finch hydro corridor in January 2014. The pipeline, which runs between Sarnia, Ont., and Montreal, drew criticism when Enbridge sought to reverse its flow and increase its capacity in 2012.

**By:** Diana Mehta The Canadian Press, Published on Sun Jan 10 2016

An Ontario First Nation is taking its fight against a controversial pipeline that runs through one of Canada's most populous corridors to the country's top court.

The legal battle over Line 9 — which runs between Sarnia, Ont., and Montreal — pits the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation against Enbridge Inc., the National Energy Board and the Attorney General of Canada.

The aging pipeline drew spirited opposition when Enbridge sought to reverse its flow and increase its capacity in 2012.

The company has since won the National Energy Board's approval, cleared regulatory obligations and has begun operating the pipeline in its new configuration.

At the heart of its legal case is a question over the duty of the Crown to consult and accommodate First nations on concerns related to the potential effects of the pipeline on their aboriginal and treaty rights.

The First Nation argues it wasn't consulted properly over the pipeline that runs through its traditional territory.

"The case has huge implications for First Nations across the country," said Chief Leslee White-Eye. "The corporations running the pipeline shouldn't be the ones fulfilling the constitutional obligations."

After the National Energy Board approved Enbridge's application, the First Nation appealed the board's decision at the Federal Court of Appeal but it was dismissed in October.

The Chippewas of the Thames is now asking the Supreme Court of Canada for leave to appeal that decision.

"What we have is a previous government that refused to come to the table and honour the obligations of the Crown through the Constitution," said White-Eye. "They didn't participate in a process that was faulty and that we had indicated was faulty and was with the wrong parties — it should have been between the nation and the Crown."

Line 9 has operated since 1976, first pumping oil eastward. Its flow was reversed in the late 90s, in response to market conditions, to pump imported crude westward.

It now supplies Alberta crude to Suncor Energy's Montreal refinery.

Enbridge said it would not comment publicly on the leave to appeal application but said Line 9 had been operating safely for more than 40 years.

"The line has recently undergone a series of major upgrades, including new valves, maintenance work and facility enhancements that made a safe line even safer," said spokesman Graham White, who called the three-year consultation on Line 9's reversal "the most extensive in the company's history" for the reversal of an existing line.

White added that Enbridge had also conducted tests on key segments of the line to ensure it was fit for service and made "considerable enhancements" to its emergency response capabilities.

The National Energy board and the officer of the Attorney General both declined to comment on the case as it was before the courts.



The Chippewas of the Thames say they have support from regional, provincial and national assemblies of First Nations in their legal battle and note that it is about more than just federal obligations.

“The basis of all of this is the land, the environment, the requirement of us to be always acting for the betterment of future generations,” White-Eye said.

“Had we been consulted prior to Enbridge’s application being reviewed, there could have been things that we could have brought to bear in terms of protective measures to ensure that if there were a spill there was going to be more measures put in place.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/10/ontario-first-nation-takes-line-9-legal-fight-to-supreme-court.html>

## **OPINION: Trudeau's not going to stop Site C. Here's why**

KEITH BALDREY / BURNABY NOW  
JANUARY 11, 2016 12:03 PM

One of the more intriguing demands by those opposing the Site C dam is that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau step in and block its construction, using the argument that the dam infringes First Nations' rights and poses environmental risk.

The odds of the Trudeau government taking such an extraordinary action are, of course, fairly remote. But the root of the argument -- that the dam tramples on First Nations' rights -- remains very much alive even while the dam's construction proceeds every day.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, a leading First Nations leader in B.C., has tried to make the case that only by killing the dam will the Trudeau government show it cares about First Nations. Other dam opponents -- notably environmental and aboriginal activists -- have echoed his demand.

But politically, the argument is a non-starter. There is no way a federal government will override a provincial government decision that is constitutionally protected (provinces have power over non-renewable natural resources, and section 92(a) of the Constitution Act specifically gives provinces power over electrical energy projects, which is precisely what the Site C dam is).

If Trudeau were to indeed try to shut down the dam's construction, he would create a constitutional firestorm that would mortify all provincial governments. Provinces always look askance (or worse) when a federal government tries to stick its nose in their constitutionally-protected business, whatever it might be.

Nevertheless, the issue of whether the dam does indeed infringe on some First Nations' constitutionally-protected rights remains unresolved, as various court challenges work their way through the legal system.

Other arguments against the dam's construction -- that there is no need for the electricity generated by the dam in the foreseeable future, that it's too expensive (forget the projected \$8.8 billion cost estimate; the final figure will inevitably be much higher), or that it is flooding precious needed farmland -- have been voiced endlessly, yet have had no impact on the government's decision to green light the project.

The dam project is shaping up to be dominant issue in the coming year, as the prospect of mass protests (and arrests) at the construction site are becoming clearer every day (when the weather improves in the summer, don't be surprised to see a protest camp become etched into the landscape along the Peace River).

It's likely to a dominant issue in the next provincial election, in May 2017. The NDP opposes the dam, although its position remains somewhat murky (party leader John Horgan doesn't seem as opposed to it as many in his own caucus and party).

But politics and protests aside, the question of whether First Nations' constitutionally-defined rights are being violated remain beyond a government's control.

Still, based on court rulings so far, B.C. Hydro must be very pleased with the results. The fact that high courts (B.C. Supreme Court and Federal Court of Canada) have so far dismissed four petitions from First Nations bands and local residents may explain why Phillips and other dam opponents are suddenly demanding the prime minister intervene.

Perhaps he, and other dam opponents, have concluded that relying on the courts to shut down the project may not be the safest of assumptions.

For example, the Federal Court of Canada's dismissal in August of a petition brought by two First Nations bands clearly concluded that B.C. Hydro's consultation with First Nations (a key requirement based on major court decisions) has "been extensive and conducted in good faith."

In fact, the court noted B.C. Hydro met with Treaty 8 First Nations 177 times and spent almost \$6 million over seven years. In other words, the dam's builder has met a key test of whether the dam can proceed, even if means the project may indeed impact local First Nations' interests.

That conclusion may ultimately pave the way for Site C becoming a reality, no matter how loud the protests (assuming the Supreme Court of Canada agrees with the lower court's interpretations and conclusions).

The court decisions may indeed explain the sudden switch in the messaging of the dam's opponents. But asking the prime minister to take such extraordinary action smacks more of desperation, rather than political reality.

*Keith Baldrey is chief political reporter for Global B.C.*

- See more at: <http://www.burnabynow.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-trudeau-s-not-going-to-stop-site-c-here-s-why-1.2148368#sthash.VpSWIoo8.dpuf>

## Provincial government says no to Kinder Morgan expansion

ROB SHAW / VANCOUVER SUN  
JANUARY 11, 2016 07:30 AM



Kinder Morgan's Burnaby terminal, from which nearly a million barrels of day of oil would be loaded onto ships. Photograph By NICK PROCAYLO, PNG

VICTORIA — The B.C. government will formally oppose the Trans Mountain oil pipeline expansion in a written submission to the National Energy Board on Monday.

Environment Minister Mary Polak told The Vancouver Sun that the government believes that pipeline proponent Kinder Morgan has failed to provide the NEB with an adequate plan to prevent or respond to an oil spill.

“We are asking them not to recommend approval,” Polak said.

The B.C. government laid out in five conditions in 2012 that it said all oil pipeline projects would have to meet before they would be allowed in the province.

The second and third conditions require “world-leading” prevention and response plans if a pipeline fails on land or if oil is spilled into any rivers, lakes or the ocean.

“As far as we’re concerned, we have not seen the evidence in the hearings to support a

conclusion that they've met our conditions on two and three," said Polak. "So we won't be supporting their approval at this time."

The \$6.8-billion Trans Mountain project would involve Kinder Morgan twinning its existing 1,150-kilometre pipeline from the Alberta oilsands to its terminal in Burnaby.

It would increase pipeline capacity between Edmonton and Burnaby from 300,000 barrels a day to 890,000 barrels, and lead to as much as a seven-fold increase in tanker traffic.

Kinder Morgan has said it will mitigate increased risks of oil spills by increasing tug escorts in inland ocean waters and beefing up spill-response capacity. The company has also noted some First Nations support the project.

B.C.'s submission to the NEB mainly deals with spill response, said Polak.

"The evidence submitted to the NEB on Kinder Morgan's specific expansion of their pipeline ... they did not submit evidence of their ability to respond in a world leading way on the land," she said.

B.C. is making progress on developing a system for oil spill response on land, said Polak.

But much of the responsibility for a marine spill falls on the federal government.

"While there is primarily federal responsibility, that doesn't mean that a company couldn't provide the resources themselves to respond adequately to a spill," said Polak, adding Kinder Morgan has failed to "step up" to that job.

"If you look at what's lacking generally on our coast, especially the capacity for tug response ... we still have significant concerns. We've had attention from the federal government, that's evidenced in the (reopening) announcement on the Kitsilano Coast Guard base and I know there's ongoing discussions with them. I know they want to see improved spill capacity on the coast. But we haven't seen that yet."

Outside of the NEB process on oil spills, the project has failed to meet any of the province's five conditions, such as obtaining First Nations support and providing the province a fair share of economic benefits, said Polak.

"At this stage, no they have not met any of our five conditions," she said.

Environmental groups, First Nations and Metro-area municipalities have objected to the project, arguing that a leak from a pipeline or oil tanker would be catastrophic for the environment and the region's economy. Several studies have predicted an oil spill would cost the region billions, pollute the water, devastate marine life and devalue property prices.

The city of Burnaby and First Nations have tried to block the project in court, and more

than 100 protesters were arrested last year after they clashed with Kinder Morgan survey workers on Burnaby Mountain.

The NEB must make recommendations to the federal cabinet on the Trans Mountain project by May 20. The final decision will be made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government.

Trudeau has promised to overhaul the federal environment assessment process for projects, as well as include more emphasis on First Nation rights. His government has said projects already in the review process won't have to start the process over, but there will be a transition period to allow for future changes to the federal regime.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/b-c/provincial-government-says-no-to-kinder-morgan-expansion-1.2148036#sthash.FGUmdgpK.dpuf>

## **Saanich moves to recognize First Nations**

by [Travis Paterson - Saanich News](#)

*posted Jan 11, 2016 at 5:00 PM*

Saanich is looking to create a proper recognition of the Wsanec families of the Coast Salish Nation with a plan to acknowledge the first peoples with a ceremonial address at formal gatherings.

The recommendation, expected to gain council's approval Monday, came from first-term Coun. Fred Haynes, and suggested staff undertake a consultation process with First Nations members of the region with a goal of suitably recognizing their history here.

There are at least seven First Nations whose traditional territories are in Saanich including Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tsartlip, Tseycum, Malahat, Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

"Saanich has yet to take the step of formally acknowledging the rich and long history of our first peoples," Haynes said. "The municipality recently celebrated its 50th anniversary in a manner that should also be reserved to celebrate its aboriginal heritage."

The recommendation calls for a consultation process with those First Nations who have a history of traditional uses of the land and waters of the District of Saanich with the intent of recognizing this heritage in the opening of Saanich meetings. However, Haynes would be happy to see the recognition go further, in the form of a sign, or signage, depicting the history at municipal hall.

Kevin Albers is the CEO of M'akola Development Services, which works to find affordable housing for First Nations people in the region.

M'akola knows a thing or two about gathering First Nations representatives, as it will ensure representation from all the First Nations which identify with having traditional territories at public gatherings or announcements in Saanich.

“I am thrilled to hear Saanich is having this conversation and acknowledging the First Nations in the area,” Albers said. “In our practise it is important to acknowledge, engage and respect each nation whose land we are working on.”

Furthermore, Haynes says there is some dispute over an incorrectly documented history of who did what, how, and when, in the area.

Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in June, this is a necessary move for Saanich, he added.

“One of the issues that I am keen on is that this isn’t a top-down placement of the wording. Rather, we want to work directly with the First Nations in a consultative manner to recognize the rich and deep First Nations’ heritage in Saanich.”

That includes seasonal settlements, harvesting, hunting and gathering and trading sites.

“With the need for truth and reconciliation across the country, it’s certainly necessarily for Saanich to recognize the heritage of the people who used the lands where we enjoy our lives today,” Haynes said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.saanichnews.com/news/364912091.html>

## **B.C. government failed to properly consult First Nations on Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, court rules**

**Gitga'at celebrating 'huge victory' after court rules province failed in duty to consult**

CBC News Posted: Jan 13, 2016 1:12 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 13, 2016 3:15 PM PT



Traditional drummers from a number of British Columbia coastal First Nations perform at Kitimaat Village, B.C., in May 2010. (Robin Rowland/Canadian Press)

The B.C. Supreme court has ruled that the province "has breached the honour of the Crown by failing to consult" with the Gitga'at and other Coastal First Nations on the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline.

The court challenge — **one of many** on the controversial proposed pipeline — stemmed from the B.C. government's agreement with Ottawa to hold a single environmental assessment process, under the National Energy Board, rather than parallel federal and provincial reviews.

In 2014, the federal government **approved the controversial pipeline** that would bring heavy Alberta oil to B.C.'s north coast.

But First Nations opponents of the pipeline argued the province wasn't living up to its own duty to consult with them, and today, the court found in their favour.

"This is a huge victory that affirms the provincial government's duty to consult with and accommodate First Nations and to exercise its decision-making power on major projects," said Arnold Clifton, Chief Councillor of the Gitga'at First Nation, in a statement.

### **B.C. government 'playing politics'**

Though the governing B.C. Liberals had agreed to the streamlined process — and even trumpeted it as something that would reduce "**byzantine bureaucratic practices**" and help create jobs, the province had also **formally opposed the pipeline**.

The B.C. government was an intervenor in the National Energy Board's joint review process, speaking against the proposal, because it didn't meet the **five conditions** set out by B.C. for any heavy oil pipeline.

The chief problem, said the government, was there wouldn't be "world-class spill response capability" in place, despite the company's claims, according to the **judgment**.

Art Sterritt, a Gitga'at member and vocal opponent of the pipeline, said the B.C. government was "playing a bit of politics" by handing over its power at the environmental assessment stage, then opposing the project.

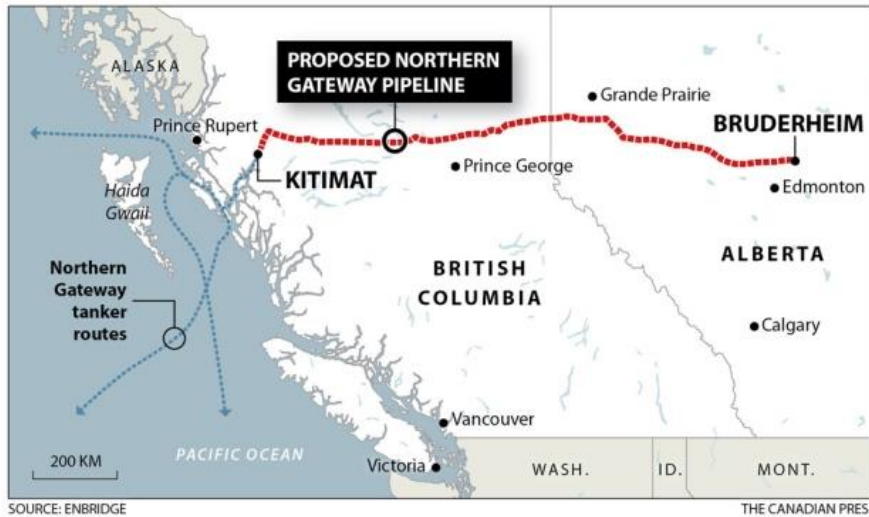
"They were saying [to the federal government] yeah, we're opposed, but you go ahead and make your decision, we'll live with it," said Sterritt.

Sterritt said the court ruling means the B.C. government would have to start from scratch on consulting with affected First Nations for its own review.



"You're talking about a whole new review process here," said Sterritt. "I'm not sure that Northern Gateway or anyone else would have the appetite for that."

B.C. Justice Minister Suzanne Anton has not yet commented on the court ruling.



The path of the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline between Bruderheim, Alta. and Kitimat on the B.C. coast. (Canadian Press)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-enbridge-ruling-coastal-first-nations-1.3402536>

## Opinion: Why First Nations oppose Site C

Treaty 8 ‘Stewards of the Land’ defend treaty rights and environment.

BY STEWART PHILLIP AND DAVID SUZUKI, SPECIAL TO THE SUN JANUARY 12, 2016



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, smiles during a news conference in Vancouver, B.C., after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of the Tsilhqot'in First Nation, granting it land title to 438,000-hectares of land on Thursday June 26, 2014.

We recently travelled to northeastern B.C.'s Peace Valley to meet with First Nations members and local landowners camped out at a remote historic fort site slated for destruction by the Site C dam.

The Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land told media they're willing to risk arrest to stop BC Hydro from clear cutting forests around Rocky Mountain Fort, on the west side of Moberly River. The site, selected by explorer Alexander Mackenzie as mainland B.C.'s first trading post, is on Treaty 8 First Nations' traditional territory.

As we sat around the fire beneath old-growth spruce and cottonwood trees, elders and community members explained that their action is not merely another environmental protest. They argued passionately that they are land stewards camped out in the forest despite bitterly cold weather to exercise their treaty rights, such as collecting medicinal plants, making prayers and tending nearby traplines.

When the Dunne-Zaa people joined Treaty 8 in 1900, a solemn and binding promise guaranteed their ability to continue to participate in these and other traditional activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing. The treaty explicitly guaranteed the Dunne-Zaa would be able to continue traditional practices "for as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow and the grass grows." In return for the necessary consent to take up these beautiful, productive lands (the Site C flood zone includes prime agricultural land and is teeming with wild game), the Crown solemnly promised that practices Treaty 8 First Nations have continuously maintained for at least 11,000 years would be allowed to continue without forced interference or forced dependency on the Crown.

Yet since signing Treaty 8, First Nations in northeastern B.C. have seen their lands irrevocably damaged by logging, oil and gas extraction, mines, dams and other resource development. Research by the David Suzuki Foundation revealed that nearly two-thirds of their traditional territories have been affected by some form of industrial development, leaving little intact habitat for wildlife like moose and caribou, which have sustained communities for millennia.

The Peace Valley is one of the few remaining places where Treaty 8 First Nations can participate in traditional activities as their ancestors did for thousands of years before the treaty was signed — activities crucial to maintaining their cultural and spiritual identity and connection to the land.

The Peace Valley could be ripped away from First Nations who call this picturesque region of B.C. home. If built, the \$9 billion Site C dam will flood 107 kilometres of the Peace River and its tributaries, including critical hunting and fishing grounds.

Site C would also obliterate hundreds of graves and ceremonial sites and directly hinder Treaty 8 First Nations' cultural and ceremonial practices.

Years of case law, as well as the Supreme Court of Canada Tsilhqot'in decision, have drawn attention to the fact that treaty and aboriginal rights enshrined by Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution are effectively meaningless if First Nations don't have access to traditional lands and waterways. The Crown must at least try to maintain the ecosystems critical to those rights so that First Nations can continue to live off healthy populations of wild game, fish and plants.

The Joint Review Panel convened by the federal and B.C. governments concluded Site C would significantly harm Treaty 8 First Nations without a definite need for the power it will produce. The panel found the dam would have "significant adverse effects" on fishing, hunting and trapping, and other traditional land uses not just in B.C., but also downstream where the Peace River enters Alberta. According to the panel, most of these adverse effects are impossible to mitigate.

If built, Site C will render First Nations' rights guaranteed under Treaty 8 irrelevant to the point of mockery.

Two Treaty 8 First Nations, West Moberly and Prophet River, have launched court cases to stop the Site C dam on the grounds that it infringes on their treaty rights. BC Hydro, urged on by Premier Christy Clark, has decided to clear cut vast areas of the Peace Valley to make way for the dam and reservoir, in effect destroying it before First Nations even get their day in court.

As we left the Rocky Mountain Fort site, where Treaty 8 members are spending another night in -20 C temperatures in the snow, we were struck by the tragedy of the situation. While politicians are bandying about reconciliation as the salve that will heal centuries-old injustices, are treaty promises even worth anything, when hunting grounds will be under water, moose populations decimated and fish contaminated with toxic methyl mercury from decaying organic matter if the dam is built?

Government promises to uphold and respect treaty rights ring hollow when construction is green-lighted before ongoing First Nations' court cases against the dam are finished. BC Hydro must stop its work immediately until the court cases are decided.

*Grand Chief Stewart Phillip is president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation.*

Read

more:<http://www.vancouversun.com/sports/Opinion+First+Nations+oppose+Site/11647693/story.html#ixzz3xEmhU115>

## **Manitoba grand chief wants meeting with Saskatchewan premier over hunting rights**

**Chief says indigenous hunters have been ticketed and threatened by Saskatchewan officials**

The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 14, 2016 1:43 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 14, 2016 1:43 PM ET



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak said the two Pine Creek reserve homes were raided Dec. 15, the same day the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report. (CBC) A Manitoba grand chief is calling for a meeting with Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall after accusing the province of harassing indigenous hunters.

Derek Nepinak with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has written a letter to Wall outlining concerns over hunters, who the chief says have been ticketed and threatened by Saskatchewan officials.

"These actions have been taken as harassment, bullying and outside the scope of authority of provincial government employees," he wrote in a letter released Thursday.

"These tactics are being employed by men and women bearing arms and wearing the crest of the province of Saskatchewan in the commissioning of their activities."

The chief of the Pine Creek First Nation has said officers raided two homes last month and confiscated moose meat harvested from their traditional territory, which crosses the Manitoba-Saskatchewan boundary. Nepinak said it happened the day the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission released its final report.

Saskatchewan officials have said they recognize the rights of indigenous hunters and would only step in if hunters were on private land without permission.

The law is clear -- indigenous hunters have the right to feed their families by traditional means, Nepinak said.

"I would like to extend to you the opportunity to meet with Indigenous leadership to begin a discussion about deconstructing the colonial legal and regulatory regimes of the past and begin moving in the direction of truth and reconciliation," he wrote to Wall.

"To this end, I will always be personally open to meet with you."

Wall was not immediately available to comment on the letter.

When asked about the issue last week, the premier said he categorically rejected some of the allegations that have been made by the chiefs. Treaty rights don't trump private property rights or the need for a province to manage its wildlife, he said.

"Whether you have a treaty card or not, you still need the permission of the landowner to hunt on private property," Wall said. "Our officials have been very careful to make sure they're never enforcing anything beyond what's enforceable. We respect treaty rights, but there are certain things that treaty rights do not trump when it comes to hunting."

Nepinak dismissed the argument that Saskatchewan is trying to conserve its moose population. Saskatchewan hands out 6,000 moose tags to sport hunters every year, but allows officials to bully and harass indigenous people who are trying to feed their families, he said.

"There is a correlation between a growing limitation of access to our traditional food sources and the explosion of diabetes to epidemic levels in our families," Nepinak wrote. "As such, the ability of a hunter to bring home natural foods to their families is critical to the health of the family."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/manitoba-grand-chief-wants-meeting-with-saskatchewan-premier-over-hunting-rights-1.3404005>

## **Les Leyne: B.C. avoided consulting First Nations**

LES LEYNE / TIMES COLONIST  
JANUARY 14, 2016 12:04 AM



Haisla First Nation Hereditary Chiefs Clifford Smith, from left, Rod Bolton and Sam Robinson on the opening day of hearings for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project in Kitimaat Village in January 2012. Photograph By Darryl Dyck

A clever argument about a detail in the federal-provincial agreement to co-operate when reviewing the Northern Gateway pipeline won the day in B.C. Supreme Court on Wednesday.

It resulted in a declaration by Justice Mary Marvyn Koenigsberg that B.C. abdicated its responsibility and breached the honour of the Crown by failing to consult with First Nations during the process of reviewing the planned crude-oil pipeline from Alberta to Kitimat.

The judgment doesn't suspend the federal government's approval of the pipeline, although the project looks to be on shaky ground regardless. But the process will have to be re-opened so B.C. can consult with one of the First Nations on the route, under direct orders from the judge.

It's an embarrassing verdict for a government that prides itself on engaging with First Nations. It justifies some of the complaints over the past several years about how B.C. signed away too much authority when it agreed with the federal government to streamline environmental reviews by consolidating them. And it highlights yet again the importance of bringing First Nations on side when it comes to pipelines. That's a complicated job that has only been accomplished in bits and pieces to date.

The "honour of the Crown" is a grand-sounding phrase that refers to the fundamental requirement on governments to act honourably on all aboriginal matters, in light of what has gone before. It has been in use for years and is uppermost in the minds of most governments when it comes to their dealings with First Nations. So a court finding — in 2016 — that B.C. breached that duty is a big deal.

“We don’t like to hear that language,” Justice Minister Suzanne Anton said. “We work closely with First Nations and will continue to do so.”

She said the verdict doesn’t overturn the federal approval of the project. It means B.C. will have to review the evidence collected and make its own decision. And B.C. can no longer defer to the National Energy Board when reviewing projects, she said.

She said B.C. is considering whether to appeal.

The argument centred on the equivalency agreement under which a joint review panel held hearings on behalf of both governments. Lawyers for the First Nations argued that the law allows for co-operation to avoid duplication, but the provisions don’t go so far as to allow for abdication of decision-making by the province.

So the director of the Environmental Approval Office was still required by law to approve the project. But the equivalency agreement negated that step.

Further, they argued that B.C. had a duty to consult First Nations before signing the co-operation agreement, because it provided for the province to avoid its obligation to make an EAO decision, which in turn meant avoiding the obligation to consult First Nations.

B.C. appeared as an intervener during the review process and opposed the project, saying numerous safety measures were needed.

That raises the prospect that if B.C. had not signed away the EAO’s duty to pronounce on the project, it would have had to consult First Nations and make accommodations. The judge said efficiency and co-operation are important, but “this does not provide sufficient justification for exercising discretion not clearly granted within the empowering legislation.”

B.C. had argued that the duty to consult can be fulfilled by either government, and the federal agencies did the job through the joint review panel.

But Justice Koenigsberg said the Environmental Assessment Act has obligations that can’t be signed away.

B.C. Liberals rewrote that act in 2002, stressing the need to balance environmental protection and economic development, and stimulate investment.

“I find that none of these objectives has any chance of being met, or even considered, if B.C. is giving up its decision-making authority before it has a chance to review a project,” the judge said. “I therefore find that it cannot be the intention of the legislators to allow the voice of B.C. to be removed in this process for an unknown number of



projects, when the purpose behind the EAA is to promote economic interest ... and to protect its land and environment.”

See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/opinion/columnists/les-leyne-b-c-avoided-consulting-first-nations-1.2150667#sthash.tGkXRBEz.dpuf>

## Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

### **'Please come home': video aims to keep indigenous women, girls off MMIW list**

**Music video encourages indigenous youth to put their safety first at all times**

By Caroline Barghout, CBC News Posted: Jan 08, 2016 2:02 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 08, 2016 5:23 PM CT



The lyrics are powerful. So are the images.

Young girls, being victimized in their own homes. Young women, disappearing on the street.



The video shows how easily indigenous women and girls can become victims. (SCO)

A video, created to warn First Nations women and girls of the dangers they face on the street, is being put together with the backing of more than 30 communities who have lost people now counted among Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

It comes as Canada prepares to hold an inquiry into the issue.

"We want them to learn to be mindful of any situation that they're in that something could happen to them," said Don Courchene, Southern Chiefs Organization chief of staff, who came up with the idea for the video.

"We feel that the best way to get to young people is through music and videos," Courchene said.

SCO represents 32 southern First Nations that have experienced the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls firsthand.



Don Courchene watches the video at the West Broadway Community Centre. (CBC)

"In our community (Sagkeeng First Nation) there's nine people that have gone missing. That's way too much in regards to a population of our size for a community," said Courchene. "So we look at our children they could be victims at any day so that's one of the reasons why we want to do it."

**They could be victims**

In the video, a man sings "time doesn't heal, it just means we have more time to feel" as the video shows a young girl sitting at a computer, while her mother nearby has no idea her daughter is being targeted by an online predator.

In another scene, two teenage girls get off a city bus and are standing on the sidewalk. A vehicle with tinted windows slows down to check them out. Later on, one of the girls waves goodbye and leaves. Her friend is seen standing alone on the side of the road. A short while later the vehicle returns and the girl disappears, as the song "*Please Come Home*" plays in the background.



The video shows a car pull up to a young girl standing alone, then she disappears. It's aimed at encouraging indigenous women and girls to put their safety first. (SCO)

The idea behind the video is to show young people that regardless of their situation, whether or not they live in a loving home surrounded by good people, that they can still fall victim.

The video was shot and edited by "Just TV" and will be part of SCO's Protecting Our Women Project. The initiative was started in the spring of 2015 and is part of a three year project funded under Status of Women Canada.

### **Families' hurt and frustration highlighted**

It is aimed specifically at First Nations women and girls who live in Winnipeg or are moving to Winnipeg.

"Many times when First Nations or aboriginal women are moving to the city .... they're not really sure about what resources are available for them, what areas of the city to avoid, what sort of safety mechanisms they can have for themselves," said Shauna Fontaine, SCO Violence Prevention and Safety Planning Coordinator. "The safety plan and tool kit we're creating is going to assist these women and girls

[to avoid] potentially dangerous situations."



Shauna Fontaine, SCO's violence prevention and safety planning coordinator, says the first step is educating women and girls of the dangers they face. (CBC)

The video is still in the editing stage but SCO plans to release it in the near future

"We figured the first step is in regards to education, is awareness so we designed an awareness tool for people to try and think about it everyday as you go out, because there's too many examples of people being lost," said Courchene.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/please-come-home-video-aims-to-keep-indigenous-women-girls-off-mmiw-list-1.3395759>

## **Inquest into deaths of Ont. students will be echoed by MMIW inquiry: Aboriginal leader**



Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler speaks in Ottawa on January 4, 2013. (Sean Kilpatrick / The Canadian Press)

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Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press  
Published Sunday, January 10, 2016 1:53PM EST  
Last Updated Sunday, January 10, 2016 1:59PM EST

OTTAWA -- An Ontario inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations high school students is raising difficult questions and themes sure to be echoed by a forthcoming inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, aboriginal leaders say.

The inquiry, which resumes Monday in Thunder Bay, is exploring how the deaths were investigated and the level of communication between officials and families, Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said in an interview.

Nishnawbe Aski is one of the parties with standing at the inquest.

"I think there are a couple of themes that have emerged from this inquest that we see a strong parallel with the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls," Fiddler said.

"One is the racism that these students experienced here in Thunder Bay and the lack of proper attention by the authorities into these deaths. There were delays in launching a full-scale search for these students once they were reported missing."

The inquest, which is being conducted in phases in front of a jury, is exploring what happened to 15-year-old Jethro Anderson, 18-year-old Curran Strang, 21-year-old Paul Panacheese, 19-year-old Robyn Harper, 17-year-old Kyle Morrisseau, 15-year-old Jordan Wabasse and 15-year-old Reggie Bushie.

The deaths, which occurred between 2000 and 2011, all took place while the students were living in Thunder Bay, away from their First Nations communities, in order to be able to attend high school.

Many northern Ontario communities lack high schools, which forces young people to live in boarding houses that are closer to available facilities, Fiddler said.

"For the most part, you don't have a choice but to go to high school -- whether it is in Sioux Lookout or Timmins or Thunder Bay," he said.

It's an experience with which Fiddler has first-hand knowledge.

"For me, it was the realization I was one of those kids," he said, recalling the memory of leaving his First Nations community to attend school in Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay.

"It hits pretty close to home. You can't help but feel that you have to do something about what was happening -- and what is happening."

Although the jury's conclusions are not binding, the hope is that it can make recommendations in order to prevent deaths in similar circumstances.

The inquest is expected to highlight systemic problems with First Nations child welfare and access to education -- areas also flagged in the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission's recent findings in its exhaustive study of Canada's now-defunct residential school system.

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett called the Thunder Bay deaths a "terrible tragedy."

"Obviously the child welfare system is not working and I have already promised that we will look at it and overhaul it to make sure that we can have families stay together whenever possible," said Bennett.

"This is truly sobering, this inquest ... we want to be able to put in place concrete actions at all levels of government to prevent this tragedy in the future."

Canada may no longer have residential schools, but the attitudes and stigmas that helped bring them about are still a factor, said NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus, whose northern Ontario riding includes a number of First Nations communities.

"I've spoken with young people who have left home at 14 and lived in boarding houses," Angus said. "They talk about the residential schools; they say, 'This is what my grandparents went through.'"

Young indigenous people are often forced to leave their tight-knit home communities behind, ending up in big cities that can be dark and dangerous alternate worlds, Angus said.

"Why is that situation happening? It is because the federal government doesn't supply high schools in many of these communities."

Bennett said the new Liberal government is looking at solutions.

"I'm heartened by the fact that so many people are thinking about these things and obviously it really touches Charlie Angus's riding," she said.

"The kinds of supports and services that are there for those communities (are) clearly not adequate."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/inquest-into-deaths-of-ont-students-will-be-echoed-by-mmiw-inquiry-aboriginal-leader-1.2731068>

## **MMIW consultation was encouraging, say Yukon families**

**Meeting with federal minister 'touching and meaningful', said one participant**

CBC News Posted: Jan 12, 2016 9:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 12, 2016 9:00 AM CT





'It's so respectful and inclusive and calm,' said Joan Jack, who travelled from Atlin, B.C., to attend the Whitehorse consultation. (CBC)

Yukon relatives of missing and murdered indigenous women said they felt encouraged after Monday's pre-inquiry consultation in Whitehorse.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett is holding private meetings with family and loved ones of victims to discuss what they want to see in the national inquiry: how it should be shaped, who should be involved and how long it should last. Before Monday's meeting in Whitehorse, Bennett had visited Yellowknife and Thunder Bay.

Some of those who attended the Whitehorse session said they were surprised the federal minister took an entire day to listen to them.

"I'm so pleased. It's so respectful and inclusive and calm," said participant Joan Jack. "There's so many support people here, it's just really wonderful."



'All morning people were thanking the minister for being here and for listening to them, and thanking her for taking time,' said Lorraine Netro of Old Crow. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)



Lorraine Netro, who travelled from Old Crow, Yukon, called the meeting "history in the making." She said she'd waited years for an inquiry.

"To be here, and to sit and witness what has taken place today, is just touching and it's just very meaningful," she said.

Organizers said about 70 people from across the territory met with Bennett on Monday. Krista Reid of the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle called the turnout "incredible."

"We've had families arrive that have never come out before. We've had families inquire that have never engaged before," she said.

### **The Sixties Scoop, human trafficking**

Some common themes have emerged at the pre-inquiry meetings held so far — among them, a desire to have indigenous women play a role in officiating the inquiry, and a recognition that the issues surrounding MMIW are too complex and that an inquiry will not necessarily satisfy everybody.



Indigenous and Northern Affairs minister Carolyn Bennett, with Yukon MP Larry Bagnell. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

Bennett said some Yukon families spoke to her about the so-called Sixties Scoop — a period from the 1960s to the 1980s when aboriginal children were taken from their families and placed with mostly non-aboriginal adoptive families. Bennett said she also heard concerns in the Yukon about present-day human trafficking.

"People are worried, and we heard a little bit about that in Thunder Bay. People are worried that vulnerable people are being preyed upon," Bennett said.

Similar consultations will be held in every province and territory ahead of the inquiry that many hope will begin this summer. The next meetings are scheduled for Vancouver and Prince George, B.C.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/mmiw-preinquiry-whitehorse-families-encouraged-1.3399424>

## **CAROLYN BENNETT: #MMIW INQUIRY WILL ACKNOWLEDGE 'UNIQUE' NORTH**

OLLIE WILLIAMS — JANUARY 11, 2016



Carolyn Bennett, centre, speaking in Yellowknife.

**Northern families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls advised federal minister Carolyn Bennett of their “unique situation” as she visited Yellowknife on Friday.**

Bennett, the minister for Northern and Indigenous Affairs, is overseeing the establishment of a national inquiry on the issue.

Yellowknife marked one of her first regional stops as she seeks to consult with the families of victims about how an inquiry should be run.

“One of the first things we heard is there needs to be an Indigenous perspective throughout the leadership, staffing and processes of the inquiry,” Bennett told reporters following Friday’s meeting.

“They’re eager to remind us that this is not a pan-Indigenous approach: there are differences and unique situations even here, where we are dealing with the Dene as well as the Metis and Inuit.

“What we’ve heard so far is they think it’s very important that the commission understands regional differences. I was intrigued that some people felt the recommendations and calls to action may also be regional.”

Bennett said she also heard calls for more treatment and support for those struggling with addictions and mental health issues.

The Liberal government hopes to have its national inquiry up and running by this summer.

“I think at the launch of the inquiry we will feel that we have been successful if families feel they have been listened to – if they can feel their fingerprints on the blueprint,” said Bennett, who predicted an inquiry with a novel look and feel.

“We have not heard, from anywhere, that it needs to be a sterile courtroom with people in the witness box. No-one thinks that’s going to work,” she added.

“I cannot imagine this work could be done sitting in one place, in Ottawa. No. We will make sure that they have the budget to move and to listen to people where they are.”

Answering a question on how the inquiry would examine the role of police, Bennett said that had been an issue “from the very first time I sat down with families, a decade ago”.

She continued: “This morning we heard, as we often do, [discussion regarding] whether investigations were thorough enough, whether the victims were viewed to be inevitable that they were found missing or murdered, the feelings of the families that things happen differently if the victim is non-Indigenous.

“But we also have heard this morning, and in other stories, of specific situations where the police officers are indeed the perpetrators.

“That is a concern and, as I’ve said before, I think First Nations, Inuit and Métis were grateful of [RCMP Commissioner] Bob Paulson’s admission [regarding racism toward Indigenous peoples]. But a ‘few bad apples’ approach is not going to be sufficient, from what I’m hearing from families. We’re hearing that people want policing dealt with in a much broader, systemic way.”

The venue for Friday’s meeting in Yellowknife was changed to accommodate the large number of people wishing to attend.

Bennett subsequently travelled to Norman Wells on Saturday to discuss ways of improving the Nutrition North program with residents.

Pre-inquiry meetings continue in Whitehorse, Vancouver and Prince George this week.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.myyellowknifenow.com/10780/carolyn-bennett-mmiw-inquiry-will-acknowledge-unique-north/>

## Men must star in murdered women inquiry

BY [DAVID AKIN](#), PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU CHIEF

FIRST POSTED: MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016 04:16 PM EST |

UPDATED: MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016 04:25 PM EST

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Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould looks on as Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett responds to a question during an announcement for a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women inquiry during a news conference in the Foyer of the House of Commons Tuesday December 8, 2015 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld

OTTAWA — Later this year, the federal government will launch an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. But really, it will be all about men.

Men must play the unavoidable starring role as the perpetrators of the violence against aboriginal women and girls. There is no getting around this fact and, though it may be obvious, it is a fact that men, in particular, need to own.

There will be many recommendations coming from this inquiry and their sole objective will be to reduce or eliminate instances of men committing acts of violence against indigenous women and girls.

All of which means this inquiry must put men, oddly enough, at the heart of their deliberations into acts of violence against women.

A trio of senior ministers in Justin Trudeau's cabinet has been and will be criss-crossing the country soliciting ideas from survivors, family members and loved ones of victims of

this violence about how this inquiry ought to be designed. Aboriginal leaders will also be asked for their input.

One of those ministers, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, was in Thunder Bay, Ont. and Yellowknife last week and was in Whitehorse Monday.

And when Bennett, along with Justice Minister (and aboriginal leader herself) Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu settle on the inquiry's terms of reference, it is almost certainly going to direct the inquiry to take the testimony of the victims. Indeed, most of the participants at these "design" meetings so far are victims themselves or are sisters, mothers, and daughters of victims.

There is no question that those voices need to be heard.

But for this inquiry, those voices — the voices of the victim — are but one half of the story.

Men — be they male police officers or male band councillors or male doctors as well as husbands, fathers and sons — must also be heard. And that is going to be the challenging part.

It will be challenging because the inquiry must find men who will testify about their failures as fathers, husbands, sons, chiefs, teachers, doctors, and so on. Men — and I'm one of them — have to change.

"We need to change our behaviours or we're just forever going to have more shelters, more rescues because we're not addressing the behaviour," Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, told me during a long chat we had about this issue. Men have to meet this challenge.

If aboriginal men testify, we will hear of crushing poverty on many reserves, the lack of job opportunities, poor education and, of course, deep racism that makes victims of many men who, in turn, physically victimize those more vulnerable than they are. The inquiry should not (nor would I expect it to) be looking for excuses for men but until we understand what drives aboriginal men to violence, the vicious cycle will not end.

Non-aboriginal men must confess to their appalling ignorance of the aboriginal experience in Canada and to their racism as contributing factors to this violence. The inquiry's challenge will be to find white guys who have the guts to 'fess up to that.

The women who testify and share their stories will show great courage. The men who testify to their failures may show even more courage.

But both voices are vital to fixing this horrific problem.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.torontosun.com/2016/01/11/men-must-star-in-murdered-women-inquiry>

# Pre-MMIW inquiry meeting set for Iqaluit later this month

**"An inquiry.... can only be designed after hearing from those directly affected"**

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, January 12, 2016 - 2:30 pm



Nunavut Sivuniksavut students hold a vigil for murdered Nunatsiavut student Loretta Saunders in 2014, while calling for an inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women. (FILE PHOTO)

Carolyn Bennett, minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, will visit Iqaluit Jan. 29 to hold her first meeting with Nunavut families and organizations ahead of the federal government's inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada.

To date, the Jan. 29 Iqaluit meeting is the government's only stop planned in Nunavut, as part of a series of pre-inquiry meetings being held across the country this month and next.

There is no meeting scheduled for the Nunavik region, but a pre-inquiry gathering will be held in Montreal on Jan. 22.

"The government of Canada believes that an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls can only be designed after hearing from those directly affected," said a statement posted to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Jan. 11.

"The government is holding meetings across Canada with survivors, family members and loved ones of victims, as well as national Aboriginal, provincial and territorial representatives to seek their views on the design and scope of the inquiry."

Bennett, along with federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Patty Hajdu, the federal minister responsible for the status of women, are leading the Trudeau government's work on designing and running the MMIW inquiry

In Iqaluit, the meeting's participants are expected to include members of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and Qullit Nunavut Status of Women.

The inquiry is finally shaping up after years of pressure from organizations like the Native Women's Association of Canada to address the pervasive issue of violence faced by Indigenous Canadian women and allegations that police and justice system officials have ignored the crisis.

A 2014 RCMP report documents more than 1,200 cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women between 1980 and 2012, although it did not specify how many of them were Inuit.

But a 2015 United Nations report found that young First Nations, Métis and Inuit women were five times more likely to die under violent circumstances than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

Among the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations last year; a call on the Canadian government to launch a national inquiry and investigate the violence and its relationship to the inter-generation legacy of residential schools.

Ottawa is covering the cost of travel to these meetings for survivors and their families as well as providing support workers to assist at the events.

The meetings are closed to the public, but there are a number of other ways to participate by phone, email or filling out an online survey [here](#).

If you or a family member is a survivor and would like to attend the meeting, call toll-free 1-877-535-7309 or email [ffada-mmwig@aandc-aadnc.gc.ca](mailto:ffada-mmwig@aandc-aadnc.gc.ca)

**Direct Link:** [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674pre-mmwig\\_meeting\\_set\\_for\\_igaluit\\_later\\_this\\_month/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674pre-mmwig_meeting_set_for_igaluit_later_this_month/)

## **Campaign casts light on missing indigenous men**

SEAN TREMBATH, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

**Published on: January 13, 2016 | Last Updated: January 13, 2016 5:00 AM CST**





**Colleen Whitedeer's brother went missing in 2014 and has not been seen or heard from since.**

Colleen Whitedeer says the system forgot her brother.

“He got lost in the cracks,” said Whitedeer, whose brother Tim Charlette hasn’t been seen or heard from in more than a year.

Now Whitedeer has embraced a campaign aiming to bring awareness to the issue of missing and murdered indigenous men, something she says needs more recognition even as similar cases involving indigenous women have gained national attention.

Charlette was homeless and addicted to alcohol. He and his girlfriend Beatrice Adam were last seen Oct. 11, 2014, near the train bridge in Prince Albert. Adam’s body was found the next day, but police were never able to figure out what happened to Charlette. Whitedeer said they told her he is believed to have drowned.

Whitedeer said she feels police gave up on finding her brother too quickly, and that his being homeless might be the reason.

“He and his girlfriend were lost in addictions. That probably has a huge effect on why they treated the case the way they did,” she said.

Last week, Whitedeer and some friends and family tied red neckties to the University and Broadway bridges in Saskatoon and the Diefenbaker and Canadian Northern Railway bridges in Prince Albert. Inspired by a similar campaign by Winnipeg woman Lydia Daniels, Whitedeer hopes the ties will act as a reminder that missing indigenous men can often be forgotten, especially those living on the street.

“Whether they’re homeless or not, at the end of the day they’re human beings, and they should be given as much representation and consideration as other people,” she said.

Myrna LaPlante has spent many hours spreading awareness of missing and murdered indigenous women as co-chair of Saskatoon’s Women Walking Together. She said the recent announcement of a national inquiry into the issue is a huge victory, but agreed that indigenous men also need attention.

“I think any process or activities to raise awareness of a particular issue is good,” she said.

LaPlante’s nephew Cody Ridge Wolfe has been missing since 2011. She has taken part in searches for him every year. She said the police have been helpful in Wolfe’s case, but that awareness of the issue is still important as it could encourage people with information to come forward.

There has been a massive improvement in awareness of missing indigenous people over the past few years, LaPlante said, but the issue is far from solved.

“There’s still lots of work to be done,” she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/campaign-casts-light-on-missing-indigenous-men>

## **Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & ‘60s Scoop**

### **Inquiry must validate stories of indigenous women prostituted on ships: NWAC**

**'We know this is going on,' says president of Native Women's  
Association of Canada**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 08, 2016 8:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 08, 2016 3:40 PM ET



Dawn Lavell Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, says a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women needs to validate stories of human trafficking on ships from Thunder Bay, Ont. (CBC)

A national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women must deal with the trafficking of indigenous women on ships from Thunder Bay, Ont., says the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Dawn Lavell Harvard said she wasn't surprised when concerns about women disappearing on ships in Lake Superior arose at a pre-inquiry consultation meeting with federal ministers in Thunder Bay on Wednesday.

CBC News first reported on research that First Nations women were **being sold into the sex trade on U.S. ships in Lake Superior** in 2013.

"We know this is going on, we know women who have experienced it, we have met them firsthand," said Lavell Harvard. "So we're hoping that, number one, this reality will be validated" by the inquiry.

In 2013, **Bridget Perrier told CBC News about her experiences as a 12-year-old victim of child prostitution on a ship** in Thunder Bay harbour. Perrier went on to co-found SexTrade 101, a Toronto-based support and advocacy group for survivors of the sex trade.

Lavell Harvard said for too many years reports of indigenous women being prostituted on ships have been dismissed by police as "urban myth" in Thunder Bay.

"So once it's acknowledged and recognized then we can begin to look at what we can do to stop this," she said.

"Obviously addressing this is going to require some international cross-border cooperation because girls are going back and forth — a convenient means of being able to escape detection when you're looking at trafficking," Lavell Harvard added.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said more than one family at the consultation meetings in Thunder Bay asked for assurances the inquiry would deal with cross-border issues because they've had a relative disappear on a ship.

Bennett said it's part of a quagmire of interjurisdictional issues that indigenous people face every day and that the inquiry will consider.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/inquiry-must-validate-stories-of-indigenous-women-prostituted-on-ships-nwac-1.3394386>

## **Survey gives families of missing and murdered indigenous women a voice**

By Leena LatafatReporter Global News, January 8, 2016 9:59 am



WATCH ABOVE: A pre-inquiry tool is offering Canadians everywhere a chance to take part and answer questions about missing and murdered indigenous women. Leena Latafat reports.

SASKATOON – As the Liberal government gears up for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, it's hoping data from a new online survey will result in concrete and practical recommendations.

The pre-inquiry tool is offering Canadians everywhere a chance to take part and answer questions about key issues and who should be leading the way. It also gives families a chance to share their stories.

Co-chair of Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik (Women Walking Together), Myrna LaPlante, says the stories are traumatic but they must be told. Two of her loved ones are still missing.

“People are happy that there is a response. That something is going to be done. That the ministers have made that commitment to really take this topic seriously. That we’ve been pressing for many years,” she said in Saskatoon Thursday.

LaPlante warns that there are still limitations and some of those impacted closely will still be left out of the process. Those who take the survey must have access to a computer and internet. LaPlante says older Canadians may not be able to type.

After speaking with the Aboriginal community, she also says many families are still dealing with anger and bitter feelings of the past.

“It’s like reopening the wounds again. Especially if they’ve had traumatic experiences with police or sentencing, or unsolved cases.”

University of Saskatchewan indigenous studies professor Allyson Stevenson says the tool couldn’t come at a better time.

“I think we’re at a stage right now where Canada, coming on the heels of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), there’s a desire on the part of Canadians, a desire on the part of indigenous people to move forward together,” said Stevenson.

Stevenson says while she's happy to see the questions dig for relevant recommendations, it's what the Trudeau government decides to do with the data that really counts.

Canada's minister of indigenous and northern affairs, Carolyn Bennett, is also inviting survivors and affected families into closed-door meetings.

Survivors, family members or loved ones wishing to attend an upcoming meeting can call 1-877-535-7309.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2441314/survey-gives-families-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-a-voice/>

## Canada's Hidden History of Oppressing Indigenous Peoples

Carly McIntosh  
1/9/16

When I reverse in time, I see myself back to a time when I was in Geography Class. When I was in class, I was a student who listened to every word that was spoken by the teacher. Geography was our history class, and one subject to come up every year was the *Underground Railroad*. Always to be taught in class was the *positive* aspects that Canada brought, not once did a teacher bring the full circle of our Canadian history out from the woods.

When being taught or told that Canada was not against the color of skin or culture, I believed them. Students have been told to believe what we were being taught in class, I was taught to believe Canada did not judge others.

With hidden secrets of Canada's true history coming to light, many stories are now being told by our elders. A story that was recently told to me by my grandparent was that many people heard stories about the residential schools but nothing was done. Canada kept all the terrible struggles hidden in the back of the books and they were left there till the year of 2015.

I do believe a positive change is in our journey. Having seen the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau apologise to all indigenous people, you could see and feel the guilt in his speech he made. Coast to coast Canada has to work together to make a change in this country.

For many past years missing and murdered aboriginal woman have been given zero help from Canadian Government. Each year that past the number of missing and murdered aboriginal woman would increase, never did it decrease. I remember when I was very young, I would walk into any grocery store and placed right by the entrance was a missing person poster. Placed on the posters were many faces of indigenous people who had been missing for years.

Now seeing the Royal Canadian Mounted Police open cold cases on missing and murdered aboriginal woman, is a beautiful first step in change. First Nation families will be given the strength to rebuild the belief that their daughter, mother, or sister can still be found.

The history of indigenous people must start being taught in every educational school across Canada. I would love to see a growth in Indigenous Arts done by First Nations being able to be seen all across Canada. Being able to see and learn indigenous culture, it would let many be able to learn a piece of themselves.

I, Mikinaak Iskew, am speaking to all the indigenous people who are presently here and to those who we have lost. This is the first year I have ever heard about residential schooling in Canada, and it is very hard for me to hear of what this country has done to indigenous people in the past.

Even knowing that I was not one who taught or abused the indigenous children in residential schools across Canada, I still feel as if I deserve a punishment of some kind and it is because I am a Canadian. With placing my hand on my heart I deeply apologise.

*We were, we are and will always be Canadians.*

*Born and raised in Manitoba, Canada and now residing in Calgary, Alberta. McIntosh recently found her ancestry. Her goal is to pursue a future with writing and hopes to open some closed eyes and minds.*

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/09/canadas-hidden-history-oppressing-indigenous-peoples>

## Ugly stain on Canada's aboriginal record: Goar

Unbeknownst to most Canadians, government officials kept trying to assimilate aboriginal children in their lifetime.



A woman is comforted at a gathering of 'Sixties Scoop' survivors before an apology from Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger in Winnipeg, June 18, 2015.



By: [Carol Goar](#) Star Columnist, Published on Mon Jan 11 2016

The week before Christmas every newly elected MP received an unsettling letter. It wasn't a threat or a warning. It was a polite reminder that they had inherited a festering injustice.

A [poster](#) was attached to the note, emblazoned with the words "Cultural Genocide." It referred to the "Sixties Scoop," a modern-day echo of the [residential schools](#) nightmare. Between 1961 and 1985 child welfare authorities [removed thousands](#) of First Nations children from their homes, their families, their communities. They transplanted them in non-aboriginal families, guided by the belief they would be better off growing up "white." A generation of indigenous Canadians, now in its 40s and 50s, was stripped of its culture, language, identity and traditions.

The adoptees, unlike the survivors of Canada's notorious residential schools, never received any acknowledgement of their loss. No government took responsibility for uprooting them, apologized or tried to rectify the damage.

After years of inaction, they launched a [class action lawsuit](#) in 2009. They identified a lead plaintiff, compiled evidence, retained a lawyer and cleared all the procedural hurdles to get the case to trial. Throughout the process federal officials used every legal tactic at their disposal to block the case and silence the claimants.

"They had 12 lawyers. They refused to sit down with us. Through five years of litigation, they kept appealing every ruling," said [Jeffrey Wilson](#), legal counsel for class action. "So we're pushing ahead."

That was the situation on October 19, 2015 when Justin Trudeau was elected Canada's 23rd prime minister. Although he promised "a [renewed relationship](#) between the federal government and indigenous peoples built on trust, recognition and respect for rights," the Liberal leader said nothing — and his agenda contained nothing — about the Sixties Scoop or its painful legacy.

Fearing they would have to start afresh, a group of survivors from Ontario sent parliamentarians a double-edged holiday greeting: "We wish you the best of festivals and religious celebrations. Our case — *Brown v Canada* — now proceeding to trial, is about our children, our culture, our festivals, our celebrations and what it means to lose them. We are First Nations' people. We believe the case may be a lesson for all peoples and their children."

The Sixties Scoop is not century-old history. It happened within the lifetime of most Canadians. Yet most citizens know little about it. They were never told that public officials, acting in their name, continued to "reprogram" aboriginal children even as Canada's disgraced residential schools closed.

[Marcia Brown Martel](#), 52, who initiated the lawsuit, was taken from her home at the age of four. Her original name was Sally Susan Mathias. Her family belonged to the Temagami First Nation. Her home was in the Beaverhouse Community near Kirkland Lake.



She and her six-year-old sister Doris Lynn were scooped in 1967. Child welfare authorities told their bereft mother they were mentally handicapped. The girls made a vow never to forget they were members of the Beaverhouse community.

They spent five years in foster care. Then Sally was adopted by a non-aboriginal family in Trent River, 50 km east of Peterborough. Her new parents renamed her Marcia. At first they treated her relatively well but the relationship deteriorated when her adoptive mother moved to Texas. By the time the teenager reached the age of majority, it had broken down completely. Her estranged mother shipped her back to North Bay. The 17-year-old arrived with no proof of her identity, no legal papers, no memory of the Ojibway language and no link to her biological family.

She applied for her birth record from the Registrar General of Canada, seeking to affirm her Indian status, only to be told Sally Susan Mathias was dead. This meant she could not claim benefits such as housing and post-secondary education to which she would have been entitled under the Indian Act. For five years she struggled, lost and lonely. But she never gave up.

Today Brown Martel is chief of the Beaverhouse First Nation. Her mission is to ensure that no aboriginal child has to go through what she endured. The court case is scheduled for June 2016.

There is still time for the Liberal government to avoid a costly, rancorous legal showdown. Although the members of the class action are seeking damages of \$85,000 apiece, most are willing to accept a negotiated settlement much lower than that. Their primary motivation is to establish, once and for all, that the government of Canada breached its constitutional duty to protect aboriginal children, allowed provincial child welfare officials to extinguish their rights under the Indian Act, failed to provide services to which they were entitled and encouraged a policy of cultural assimilation. They want an ironclad assurance it will never happen again. "It's not about money; it's about systemic change," says Wilson.

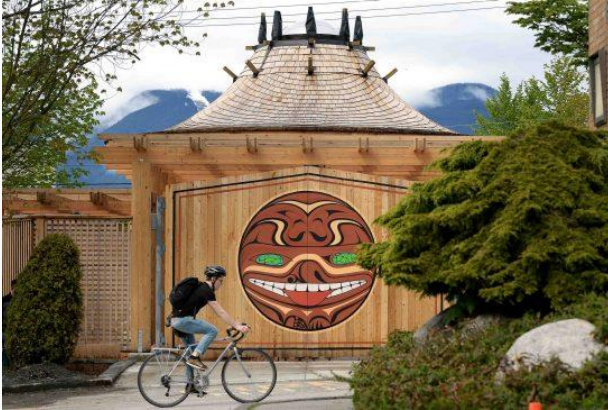
For Trudeau it is about reconciliation, fairness and respect. It is his first chance to right a wrong that has festered for too long.

*Carol Goar's column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/01/11/ugly-stain-on-canadas-aboriginal-record-goar.html>

## **Vancouver park board poised to adopt Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action**

The Vancouver Park Board has recommended how it can incorporate more than a dozen Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action.



A man cycles by the exterior of the Aboriginal carving pavilion at the Britannia Community Centre in April 2015.

**By: [Emily Jackson](#)** Metro Published on Sun Jan 10 2016

The Vancouver Park Board is poised to take action on the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which aims to redress the legacy of residential schools and work towards reconciliation between Canada and its Aboriginal peoples.

Park board commissioners will vote Monday night on 11 recommended strategies to respond to the TRC's calls to action released in spring 2015. The park board believes it has the opportunity to make changes related to 28 of the TRC's 94 calls to action, according to a staff report.

Measures include staff training on indigenous issues, support for indigenous children, youth and elders, working with First Nations on stewardship of lands including Stanley Park, acknowledging Aboriginal language rights and establishing a program for artists with community projects that contribute to reconciliation.

The action plan received a positive reaction from Scott Clark, executive director of [Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement](#) (ALIVE).

"Any positive direction is good, but I think there's real potential here to make a difference," Clark said before the meeting.

Clark was excited to see an action plan that builds on the work ALIVE has been doing at east side community centres. He hopes the park board will engage with vulnerable people and open up its community centres for children and families.

Ultimately, ALIVE's goal is to address inequality and to create space for urban Aboriginal people to engage fully with mainstream institutions including the park board.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2016/01/11/vancouver-park-board-to-adopt-trc-recommendations-.html>

# Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

## HUD and Veterans Affairs issue \$5.9M grant for homeless Native American veterans

By [Anjali Shastry](#) - *The Washington Times* - Friday, January 8, 2016

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Veterans Affairs announced a \$5.9 million grant on Friday to help homeless Native American veterans receive permanent homes and supportive services.

The award, part of Opening Doors, President Obama's 2010 plan to end veteran homelessness in the country, will help 500 Native American veterans in 26 tribes across 12 states.

HUD Secretary Julian Castro announced the grant during the winter meeting of the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"By targeting resources directly to tribes, we can better honor the service and sacrifice of Native American veterans who now need a roof over their heads," Mr. Castro said.

"These heroes deserve hope for a brighter future, and by offering permanent housing solutions, combined with needed services and case management, we can work with tribes to end veteran homelessness."

The 26 tribes that won awards will manage the housing vouchers provided by HUD and distribute them to members who require them on tribal lands.

The HUD-VASH housing vouchers are an interagency effort between HUD and the VA that rapidly rehouse veterans who have fallen into homelessness and give them counseling, clinical help, job support and other services to help them maintain their housing.

Native American veterans have historically been neglected in the effort to end homelessness, and the award opens up lines of communication between the federal agencies and the tribes to reach veterans who need assistance. The grant will specifically be used for veterans who live on or near a reservation or other designated Native American land.

The Native American tribes will also be providing healthcare to eligible veterans as part of a partnership with the VA, according to the VA.

"Targeting HUD-VASH vouchers to veterans living on tribal lands opens new opportunities for helping Native American veterans exit homelessness as quickly as possible," VA Secretary Robert McDonald said. "We are pleased that recent statutory changes to the HUD-VASH program made it possible to award these vouchers for use within Indian Country, where Native American veterans have existing support systems that can be aided by those provided under the HUD-VASH Program to help the veterans remain stably housed."

The housing voucher program has helped 90,000 veterans by awarding more than 79,000 vouchers since 2008, a VA representative said. This grant is part of a demonstration program Congress authorized in 2015 to expand housing vouchers to Indian country.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jan/8/hud-and-veterans-affairs-issue-59m-grant-homeless-/print/>

## **'Get Off the Stage, Squaw!' 14-Year-Old Native American Is No Stranger to Racism**

Tara Houska

1/7/16

"Get off the stage, squaw!"

Bella Cornell, a 14-year old girl from the Choctaw Nation, heard these words as she finished her testimony against the name and mascot of the McLoud High School Redskins during a school board meeting last month.

In the packed audience, her mother was distraught watching her daughter. "It was horrible to see," said Sarah Adams-Cornell. "It takes so much for one of our kids speak up. I wanted to take her out of there and protect her. She's my child."

A few weeks prior, Woodrow Wilson, McLoud High's Indian Education director, had reached out to Adams-Cornell hoping she would be willing to testify to the school's board about Native mascots. Several local Native American families had privately voiced their concerns to him, with one family stating they [no longer participated](#) in school events because of references to 'dumb, subhuman Redskins.'

A vote on the mascot had been scheduled in a meeting open to the public, but the concerned local Native families didn't want to testify, fearing backlash and bullying against their children. "The Board wouldn't allow anonymous comments, you had to actually be present at the meeting to speak out," said Adams-Cornell.

Upon Wilson's invitation, Adams-Cornell made the trip from Oklahoma City to the small town of McLoud, Oklahoma. Her daughter, Bella, refused to be left out.

"My mom raised me traditionally, I know how to treat sacred items, how to treat regalia. To see it used as a plaything is wrong. People aren't mascots," she said.

Cornell is no stranger to experiencing hostility and ignorance about Native Americans. When she was in 8th grade, a history teacher gave an account of America's first peoples that left her stunned and in tears. "He called us vicious vermin and said we were cannibals," she said. "Other kids came up to me after and asked if I ate people."

"She came out to the car in tears," Adams-Cornell said. "I spoke with the principal and then with the teacher. He stood by what he taught, the principal said the school would 'keep an eye on it.'"

At the McLoud School Board meeting, audience members heard defenders of the name state it was an honor and it was tradition. One man was particularly vocal in his defense of Native mascots, at times shouting at Native Americans speaking against mascots – he was a founder of the Native American Guardians Association, a group of Native Americans and allies that claims to preserve the positive imagery of Native mascots.

Multiple psychological studies have empirically shown Native American mascots [harm the self-esteem](#) of Native American youth and [indoctrinate racial stereotypes](#) in non-Native children.

The board vote was unanimous – in a [3-0 vote](#), McLoud High School would remain the Redskins.

Adams-Cornell has kept in touch with the local Native families who wished to remain anonymous; they've now filed a complaint with the Department of Justice.

While the [23-year long](#) legal battle between Native Americans and the NFL's Washington Redskins rages on, several public schools that share the moniker have dropped the name. Backlash against change has been widespread, with some alumni going so far as to [run for school board](#) positions vowing to bring back the name.

"It's strange to see someone who feels so entitled to give their perspective on something that doesn't negatively affect them or their children," said Adams-Cornell. "I saw one woman [at McLoud] say that giving her testimony supporting the name was the hardest thing she'd ever had to do. She's up there crying, when this actually hurts Native children."

Though she understands her mother's concerns after the meeting in McLoud, Cornell says she will continue to fight. The Choctaw teen hosts "Indigenous Aiukli," a [radio show](#) dedicated to Native American youth advocacy. 'Aiukli' is Cornell's middle name, meaning 'beautiful' in Choctaw.

"If we give up, it tells them that they won," said Cornell. "What happened to me is what happens when you allow racism."

Tara Houska (Couchiching First Nation) is a tribal rights attorney in Washington, D.C., a founding member of [NotYourMascots.org](http://NotYourMascots.org), and an all-around rabble rouser. Follow her: [@zhaabowekwe](https://twitter.com/zhaabowekwe).

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/07/get-stage-squaw-14-year-old-native-american-no-stranger-racism-162992>

## VILLAGE SEAL FEATURING NATIVE AMERICAN DEEMED OFFENSIVE



A controversial town seal showing a settler wrestling a Native American is facing a vote in New York Friday, January 08, 2016 07:38AM

WHITESBORO, NY --

The seal for the village of Whitesboro in New York is raising the eyebrows of some residents who call the central image offensive. They're asking for it to be changed.

Officials [tell station WKTV](#) the image depicts Hugh White, the founder of Whitesboro, in a friendly wrestling match with a local Native American. They say it's supposed to show how white gained respect from the local indigenous people.

The controversial seal has changed slightly over the years, but the original image dates back to 1883.

Recent calls to change the seal have prompted a vote on a new seal. Residents will vote on a series of new images that could represent the town in the future. The ballot is not legally binding.

Mayor Patrick O'Connor said, "We want to just put an end to it once and for all let the



residents have the say about what seal they want to represent them and their home and they're history."

**Direct Link:** <http://abc13.com/news/village-seal-featuring-native-american-deemed-offensive/1151224/>

## Panel speaks on Native American historical trauma

By **Jason Mast**

9:06 p.m. Jan. 7 2016

As Northwestern University moves to broaden recruitment and inclusion of Native American students on campus, a panel of indigenous scholars spoke to about 40 people in Tech auditorium about how historical trauma continues to impact native families today. The event was part of a series of lectures related to *The Inconvenient Indian*, this year's One Book One Northwestern.

"The term historical trauma may lead people to think that we're only talking about the remote past," Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart said. "But for me everything up to the last minute is history."

Heart, the clinical social worker and researcher who originally developed the concept of historical trauma for the Lakota people, compared the experience of Native Americans to that of survivors of the Jewish holocaust. The impact of the original genocide compounds over generations, leaving scars not only on those who saw the loss, but, Heart argues, on their descendants. Heart said the legacy of massacres, forced relocation, and hostile US policy, continued to traumatize Native Americans into the 21st century.

According to Heart, one of the most traumatizing examples were the American Indian boarding schools. US government officials forcibly separated Native American children from their families and brought them to boarding schools run by military personnel. Physical and sexual abuse was rampant, Heart said, and when those children grew up, they often abused their kids in turn, creating a cycle of violence.

The result is the highest rates of suicide, unemployment and alcoholism among any demographic in the United States, according to Heart, along with high rates of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self esteem, intense fear and survivor's guilt from historical massacres. Therefore historical trauma devastates communities to this day, Heart concluded.

"Community members feel like they're constantly going to funerals because of the high rates of deaths, alcohol related illness and the ongoing trauma," Heart said. "So they're always in a state of mourning."

Heart cited a woman who lost five relatives in a collision with a drunk driver, lost five relatives in a collision with a drunk driver the next month, lost another relative to a heart attack and a teen cousin to suicide the month after. The surviving members of her family are descendants of massacre survivors and boarding school people.

The trauma is observable on a molecular level. Heart cited research that trauma leaves epigenetic markers – reversible changes on top of genes that can affect everything from weight to mental health – that are passed on to children.

To treat the epidemic, Heart developed a response intervention program specifically designed for indigenous people. It centers on confronting genocide and the policies that inflicted trauma, while



embracing traditional indigenous culture and ceremonies. She said it's led to reduced feelings of depression, shame and guilt and increased joy in clinical studies.

"The brain is actually very resilient and there's a lot of literature coming out now about [the effectiveness of] different kinds of alternative healing, which are similar to many of the things we do in our traditional ceremonies," Heart said. "I believe that our ceremonies can actually affect brain chemistry."

Heart and fellow panelist Megan Bang, an associate professor at the University of Washington, said that native students need these particular interventions, because most of the literature on mental health comes from studies on people who are W.E.I.R.D. (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) and might not apply to indigenous people.

Bang emphasized the need to hire native teachers so native students have role models and adults who understand their needs and histories. University of Denver Professor Ramona Beltran said workshops in which indigenous people tell their history can also curb historical trauma.

Beltran worked on a research team at the University of Denver that examined the role John Evans, a founder of Northwestern University, played in the Sand Creek Massacre that killed nearly 200 Native Americans. She said just having the governor of Colorado acknowledge the massacre and apologize was important.

"This speaks to the great resilience of our indigenous people," Beltran said, "They are not asking for erasure of old stories of history, they just want their story told as well"

In October, Northwestern announced they would hire a new assistant director for Native American outreach and inclusion. The decision came a year after Northwestern's own investigation into the Sand Creek Massacre produced 50 recommendations for how the university could improve its relationship with Native American communities.

One of the main recommendations, an Indigenous Student Resource Center, was replaced in October with an Indigenous Studies Research Initiative.

Still, Bang suggested there was a limit to which the University could truly be inclusive. She said that classroom settings devoid of nature, land or water continued to rob Native Americans of their culture's education, pointing specifically to the Tech lecture hall where the panel was held.

*Editor's note 1/8/16: This story was updated to correct a copy error.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.northbynorthwestern.com/story/panel-speaks-on-native-american-historical-trauma/>

## **Suicides and 'Shorter, Bleaker' Lives Plague Indigenous Groups Around the World**

By Eva Hershaw

January 8, 2016 | 8:35 am

A chronic failure to secure the land rights of global indigenous populations has led to systematic loss of land and displacement that has exposed tribes to new diseases, generated malnutrition, and driven indigenous suicide rates well beyond national averages.

In a [report](#) released by Survival International, researchers outline how promises of development and progress have failed to materialize for indigenous groups around the world. In a variety of cases — from Canada and Australia to the Congo and Brazil — attempts to "civilize" indigenous populations have, instead, threatened their very survival.

"Forcing development on tribal peoples never brings a longer, happier life," the report states, "but a shorter, bleaker existence only escaped in death."

A particularly striking case is that of the Guaraní-Kaiowa indigenous people of southern Brazil, who report a suicide rate 34 times higher than the national average. The Brazilian Guaraní community, estimated at 40,000, forms the majority of the 70,000 Guaraní that live between Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia.

*'It is an ongoing nightmare.'*

Beginning in the 1940s, when then president Getúlio Vargas incentivized agricultural development in his famed "March to the West," the Guaraní have been fighting with farmers and developers over ancestral land they assert is guaranteed to them by the Brazilian Constitution. But absent viable legal remedies and neglected by local authorities for the past 30 years, the Guaraní have responded in extreme form: by taking their own lives.

Brazilian anthropologist Spensy Kmitta Pimentel has described the events as "protest suicides" that come as "a result of an experience of helplessness" that has become common to the Guaraní. In 2013 alone, there were 73 reported suicides, most of which were at the hands of indigenous adolescents. Agribusiness has destroyed much of the forest that once provided the Guaraní with their food, and between 2005 and 2015, at least 86 Guaraní children died as a result of malnutrition.

"It is an ongoing nightmare," said Barbara Arisi, an anthropologist at the Federal University of Latin-American Integration in Brazil. She explained that the suicide

numbers are, unfortunately, "not news anymore" in a country where indigenous groups have been systematically stripped of their land and their rights. "The land for the Guaraní is a must have," she said. "It's not something the government should delay — the violence there will only increase."

Last August, 24-year-old Semiao Vilhalva was killed by a gunshot to the face when the Guaraní collectively occupied three farms in Matto Grosso do Sul, which they claimed had been established on their land. Recently, a farmer shot at another member of the Guaraní tribe 18 times — only two of the bullets struck him, narrowly missing vital organs. While Brazil's constitution guarantees indigenous rights to ancestral land, Arisi said, this is a right that has been increasingly ignored or denied by authorities.

But the plight of the Guaraní speaks to a larger concern: the loss of land and land rights remains the greatest single predictor of suicide among indigenous tribes. In Canada, some indigenous groups that have been removed from their land have suicide rates 11 times the national average, compared to no suicides among those that remained on their land. A similar pattern can be seen in Alaska.

"It's a sign of how desperate and dispossessed tribal people feel when they are pushed off their land and forced into the mainstream," said Sophie Grig, senior campaigner with Survival International. "It is a crumbling of self-esteem that you see when people are taken away from the land that means so much to them — it's not just land, it's the land of their ancestors."

The loss of land also stresses a once reliable food supply, with many relocated tribes replacing a more diverse diet with cheap, highly processed foods linked to diabetes. Displaced people are also subject to racist discrimination by their new neighbors, the report points out, as their children may be taken to boarding schools that separate them from their communities and may forcibly oppress their language and traditions.

While the myriad effects of land loss are complicated, Grig believes the solution to the problem, in many cases, could be surprisingly simple: guarantee indigenous rights to the land, and let them decide what kind of development they want.

In Australia, where aboriginals have a life expectancy 10 to 15 years below the average non-aboriginal citizen and a suicide rate nearly six times the national average, they are two times more likely to die as a child, three times more likely to die of avoidable causes, seven times more likely to die of diabetes, and 19 times more likely to die from rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.

But when aboriginals lived on their own land, researchers found, they lived on average of 10 years longer than those in resettled communities.

These are numbers that, according to Grig, need to be incorporated into national policies and international development goals, such as the recently released United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The goals, she says, "miss a trick in that they totally fail to recognize that for tribal and indigenous people, terms like poverty — living off of so many dollars per day — are meaningless," and that most tribes are healthier on their native land, regardless of income.

In Brazil, the Guaraní are calling on the government to take immediate action as their situation grows more dire. Tribal elders have painted the ongoing conflict a deliberate attempt at genocide, intended to slowly kill off the remaining members of the group. And in an uncharacteristic attempt to gain national traction, they are taking to the streets.

"For many years, they had a strategy of becoming invisible for the outsiders, but now they came into despair, and they are trying to make their case more visible," said Arisi, who believes the government needs to step in and demarcate the indigenous land. "They now realize that if they don't, they will lose everything."

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/suicides-and-shorter-bleaker-lives-plague-indigenous-groups-around-the-world>

## **Durango recognizes Indigenous Peoples' Day over Columbus Day**

Advocate hopes new label will encourage awareness

By [Mary Shinn](#) Herald staff writer

Article Last Updated: Thursday, January 07, 2016 8:03pm



From left, Hector Flores, Leah Gallegos, Gloria Estrada, Denisa Carlos and Daniel French of the band Las Cafeteras perform in front of Reed Library on the campus of Fort Lewis College in October as part of the Real History of the Americas series of workshops and performances on campus. Student Ruthie Edd hopes Durango's formal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day will encourage more people to attend the activities this fall.

**This** year, Durango will recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday of October, after a decision this week by Durango City Council.

Fort Lewis College student Ruthie Edd, who advocated for the recognition of the holiday to replace Columbus Day, hopes it will give students, teachers and the community in general an opportunity to talk about Native American history and the history of indigenous people around the world.

"It's really to celebrate and to heal and also to connect on both sides," she said.

Growing up in Durango, she found Thanksgiving and Columbus Day were some of the times in school when people would talk about Native Americans. She hopes the new holiday will be a platform for cultural awareness.

"It can be really hard, especially for younger students, to be a voice for their culture," she said.

She became more of an advocate in high school and has stayed involved with the Peace Leader of the Diné Club on campus. Edd founded the club for Navajo students to practice their culture and language together.

She also authored the resolution adopted by the City Council on Tuesday.

"I think by high school, I had understood if we didn't speak out, no one would hear us," she said.

Edd and her friends advocated for Fort Lewis College to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day this year. The designation was approved by the Associated Students of Fort Lewis College and President Dene Thomas' cabinet in December.

Many other cities, including Seattle, Albuquerque and Minneapolis, and several states have also recognized the holiday, which helped inspire Edd.

In honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day, she wants community members, especially students, to come to the Real History of the Americas activities held at Fort Lewis College. For the last eight years, students have organized a celebration of the history of North and South America from the perspective of Native, Hispanic, African-American and Asian peoples, among others.

In recent years, the celebrations have included dance, poetry and other artistic expressions

"It can be really hard to articulate everything in an academic setting or in writing," she said.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.durangoherald.com/article/20160107/NEWS01/160109727/Durango-recognizes-Indigenous-Peoples%E2%80%99-Day>

## Legislation could desecrate state's Native American heritage



Indian burial mounds at Lizard Mounds County Park. A new bill would make it easier to develop similar mounds around the state.

*By Emily Mills*  
Jan. 8, 2016

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Wisconsin has an abundance of natural beauty and historical sites; so much and so many that I've hardly begun to scratch the surface of exploring it all in my 16 years in the state. I'm grateful to live in a place with such a rich tradition of environmental and historical stewardship that makes this true. Which is why I'm appalled by a proposed bit of legislation that would open the door to desecration of one of Wisconsin's unique features.

The effigy mounds that dot our landscape — Wisconsin has more of them than any state in the country — are links to an ancient past and people, some of whose descendants still live here. Some of these structures, which represent everything from bears to deer to geometric shapes in alignment with astronomical features, date back more than a millennium. They represent a connection to that ancient past, and are sacred places for many, especially since the majority of the mounds are also burial sites.

Yet two state representatives have introduced a bill that would open many burial mounds to excavation and destruction, all in the name of temporary profit. Reps. Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield) and Robert Brooks (R-Saukville) introduced AB 620 in December. The Legislative Reference Bureau assessment shows that, if enacted, the law would require that the Wisconsin Historical Society give property owners a permit that would allow them to "investigate" on their own whether a mound included burial remains. If none could be found, the landowners then would be allowed to use the property however they chose.

It's difficult not to see this as a law custom-designed to benefit one business interest in particular. Wingra Stone and Redi-Mix have been pushing in recent years to be allowed to destroy a mound in one of its limestone quarries in order to access the aggregate underneath.

Thousands of the mounds have long since been destroyed, plowed under for agricultural use and development by white settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Of the mounds that remain and are cataloged, some 90% are estimated to include burial remains. Beyond that, the mounds are a priceless cultural artifact. We have plenty in the way of resources. Arguing for the plunder of such a small but sacred feature of our state just smacks of callous thoughtlessness, especially toward Native American peoples for whom these sites have even greater significance.

There's also the problem of the process by which companies would go about "investigating" sites for remains. Ground radar technology is not foolproof, especially if remains are already very decomposed, and many such endeavors would necessitate digging. That in itself means destruction of the mound. The point shouldn't be whether or not physical remains exist. That these effigy mounds are considered sacred to a people still living in the area, and that they represent an irreplaceable and rare historical feature in our state, should be more than enough reason to continue to protect and preserve them.

Tailoring a law to benefit such a niche business or industry is also, in general, a pretty terrible way to govern. We ran into this same issue when lawmakers rammed through rule changes specifically to benefit Gogebic Taconite, the mining company that wanted to put in a large open pit iron mine in the Penoque Hills. Gogebic ended up pulling out of the state almost entirely (likely due to incredible community and federal pushback), but that law to weaken environmental regulations remains on the books.

Fortunately, there are a whole lot of folks in Wisconsin who not only oppose this current assault on protecting our cultural heritage from unnecessary destruction, but are working hard to ensure it doesn't happen. A rally led by representatives of the Ho-Chunk Nation is planned for noon Tuesday on the west side of the Capitol building in Madison. Already, representatives of the nation have been reaching out to the officials who introduced the bill to explain why it's a bad idea. Nearly 5,000 signatures have been collected for a petition against the law at [savethemounds.com](http://savethemounds.com).

The Ho-Chunk Nation has played a large role in defending the cultural and environmental heritage of the state. Last year, it added explicit environmental protections to its constitution. It's part of a belief system that sees nature — air, water, wildlife — as having rights just as people do. Given that the well-being of any one of those things is inextricably tied up with all of the others, it makes perfect sense to see things that way. Whether you call them "rights" or not, acknowledging the interconnected web of life is crucial to the survival of our species.

By doing this, the Ho-Chunk also have more firmly positioned themselves to have legal standing in the fight to protect natural and cultural resources like the mounds.

The effigy mounds are part of the cultural legacy of everyone who calls Wisconsin home. They deserve the same level of reverence and protection that we'd afford any burial



ground, spiritual sanctuary or other important historic site. After decades of unfettered development, we only have so much left. Let's act before it's too late.

*Emily Mills is a freelance writer who lives in Madison. Twitter: [@millbot](#);  
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**Direct Link:** <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/legislation-could-desecrate-states-native-american-heritage-b99647346z1-364702521.html>

## DEFOVER30: Quese IMC Drops Highly Anticipated Indigenous Hip-hop Album

Vincent Schilling

1/8/16

After nearly three years since his last project, Indigenous hip-hop pioneer Quese IMC (Seminole) has just released his latest solo project, DEFOVER30.

He has performed with Run DMC, Petey Pablo, Pharcyde, Ludacris, DJ Grandmaster Flash and more, his music has appeared in major and independent films and he has composed and released this project featuring Emmy-award-winning hip-hop artist Jabee, Witko of MTV's rebel music and more.

In a conversation with ICTMN, [Quese IMC](#), who now also offers workshops, keynote speaking on the Indigenous hip-hop movement and music production explains how he has managed to still be "DEF" over 30.

### **How long has it been since your last album?**

My last album was a collaboration in 2013. My last solo album I put out was in July 2011. It has been almost five years, so this is pretty special in terms of a solo project.



### **What is the backstory to this album?**

This is my longest project ever; I've been working on it for about a year and a half. This album is definitely an 'artist' album, complete with its attention to struggles, good times, pains and more. I always tell people this album has been through it all with me.

**A lot of your tracks cover topics related to solidarity and the embrace of multiculturalism, can you comment on that?**

On this album I address a lot in regards to red and black solidarity, Indigenous hip-hop and more. I also address allying with our black relatives, whether it be #BlackLivesMatter, the Nation of Islam, Justice or Else, The Million Man March and [I address] the importance indigenous people play in supporting our black relatives. I address this because of the similar struggles we face today. We can embrace our differences as strong people in solidarity.



*Courtesy Quese IMC*

**What is the overall message of your album?**

The message is "Spiritual solidarity amongst all people through conscious, Indigenous hip hop music." Being one of the pioneers of Indigenous hip hop, with the music I have been able to make and the events I have been able to organize over the years - I like to say that our older figures in this hip hop movement are still relevant.

We were there - in the 80s and the 90s - at a time when the golden era of hip-hop in its relation to indigenous people was not as connected.

This is the whole reason I call this album DEFOVER30. The title doesn't mean 'Definitely' over 30, it means DEF, that we are still dope over 30. We are still fresh, we are still relevant, we are still here, over 30. We are putting out good conscious-positive, dope hip-hop music.

This is music for the people. This is music for the movement. This is music for a solution.

**Sometimes in the Native community, especially on social media, you will find comments directed toward indigenous hip-hop that state "hip-hop is not Native music." How do you respond to that?**

I would say that hip-hop affected me when I was a kid. I grew up as a freestyler and as a battle MC. I was moved by Public Enemy, I was moved by the free South Africa movement, I was moved by black culture. I was moved by the people uniting with their fists up in fighting the power.

This togetherness of the people influenced me. In regards to ourselves as Indian people, to include our lives, the battles, the struggles ... we have always been together. we have had our struggles and differences amongst tribes that pitted us against each other, but in the end, after colonization, assimilation and oppression - we have started to band together and come together.

We can come together at a ceremony. We can come together at a pow wow, but hip-hop is a music that was created out of struggle by black youth and brown youth in New York. Hip-hop is a way and the medium for us to use in order to relay this message. Hip-hop is what I have always used.

In the 90s, I wanted to tell a story. I thought, "Man, I'm Native, I want to tell a story this way, through hip-hop."

We as Natives use hip-hop in the same way we use our sacred pipe or our sacred tomahawk. We use it to bring peace or we use it to go to war with a message or to wake people up.

I grew up hearing, "This is black music, why do you do that?" But our elders have started to realize that how we express hip-hop is a positive thing.

#### **What advice do you have for young artists?**

It is important to have a hustle and grind. It is important to work hard. In my day we didn't have social media. A lot has changed. Posting your show on social media though is not enough – you still have to work hard.

No matter what, it is all still about the grind, the hustle. You have to work hard.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/08/defover30-quest-imc-drops-highly-anticipated-indigenous-hip-hop-album-163017>

## **Leonardo DiCaprio Honored Native Americans in His Golden Globe Acceptance Speech**



January 10, 2016

Leonardo DiCaprio went home with the gold Sunday night as the winner of the Golden Globe for best actor in a drama film. As he wrapped his speech, DiCaprio took a moment to honor the Native Americans depicted in *The Revenant*.

As the play-off music began to swell at the end of DiCaprio's speech, rather than shoos the actor offstage, it became background music for a crowd-pleasing and uproarious end to his speech.

"It is time that we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them," DiCaprio said. "It is time that we heard your voice and protected this planet for future generations."

**Direct Link:** <http://news.yahoo.com/leonardo-dicaprio-honored-native-americans-042826221.html>

## **Native American Groups Plan Capitol Rally Against Effigy Mounds Bill**

**Bill's Author: 'Spiritual Connection To Your Land' Does Not Get Passed On To A Property Owner**

Tuesday, January 12, 2016, 8:50am

By Chuck Quirnbach

Native Americans are scheduled to protest at the state Capitol on Tuesday over a bill that could affect protection of effigy mounds.

Several critics spoke at a town hall meeting held by Republican state Sen. Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield on Monday night in Pewaukee. Kapenga's measure would require the Wisconsin Historical Society to let property owners investigate whether mounds on their land contain burial remains and if not, develop the land.

Historian Thomas Sobottke said property owners have a responsibility to maintain artifacts.

"If somebody is going to buy property or they have it and there are effigy mounds all over the place, well, tough luck buddy. You're taking on a responsibility," said Sobottke.

But Kapenga said effigy mounds, which are shaped like animals or people, aren't locked into a property.

"Spiritual connection to your land does not pass on from property owner," Kapenga said.

Native Americans from throughout the Midwest are expected at Tuesday's protest.

In addition to the midday protest at the state Capitol, a sunset gathering honoring effigy mounds is scheduled at the site of a mound in Milwaukee.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.wpr.org/native-american-groups-plan-capitol-rally-against-effigy-mounds-bill>

# Whitesboro Votes to Keep Seal That Appears to Show White Man Choking Native American

by Caitlin Nolan 10:20 AM EST, January 12, 2016



A Central New York village has voted overwhelmingly in favor of keeping its seal, which appears to depict a white man choking a Native American. Residents of Whitesboro voted 157 to 55 on Monday night to not change their current seal, which has been criticized as racist. It appears throughout the village on police cars, trucks, signs, highway equipment, letterheads and documents.

According to the village's website, its insignia dates back to the early 1900s and shows a “friendly wrestling match” between the village’s founder Hugh White and a member of the Oneida Indian Nation.

“The wrestling match was an important event in the history of the settling of the Village of Whitesboro and helped foster good relations between White and the Indians,” the website says.

A notice of claim filed with the Village Board in 1977 said the seal depicted a “white man choking an Indian” and said the seal demeans, disgraces and creates prejudice and distrust of Indian people,” the site noted.

“As a result, the seal was redesigned with Hugh White’s hands being placed on the Indian’s shoulders and not so close to his neck,” the site said.

Residents were reportedly presented with several drawings to choose from during Monday's meeting, including settlers and Native Americans standing together as well as the old Erie Canal, which bordered the older part of the village.

"Whitesboro views this seal as a moment in time when good relations were fostered. It is a wrestling match, part of the history, and nothing more," village clerk and historian Dana Nimey-Olney said, the Associated Press reported.

But an online petition created last summer garnered nationwide attention after it called for a change to the seal, reaching nearly 10,000 signatures.

"I want to express my disgust and disappointment in this image displayed on city police cars and letterhead. Many local nations, like the Oneida, Mohawks, Lenape, Shinnecock, Mahicans, and Onondaga, agree that the logo is very much disrespectful to Native American," the change.org petition reads.

The petitioner, who describes himself as a "Lenape Indian and a citizen of both the Delaware Tribe of Indians and Cherokee Nation," called on Whitesboro to redesign the crest, writing: "It is no longer appropriate to shroud oneself in the Confederate flag, or use Native Americans as mascots... Americans are standing up and speaking out against images and rhetoric that can be construed as hateful."

"It's time to redesign the sign to something that truly reflects the friendship between native people and settlers."

The vote was to gauge public interest and is not legally binding. Officials reportedly plan to discuss the results at a meeting Tuesday night.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.insideedition.com/headlines/14018-whitesboro-votes-to-keep-seal-that-appears-to-show-white-man-choking-native-american>

## **African-Native American exhibition comes to Palm Springs**

**Mauricio Pena, The Desert Sun**10:22 a.m. PST January 12, 2016





Buy

The Smithsonian traveling exhibition on African-Native American identity is set to open Jan. 19 at the [Agua Caliente Cultural Museum](#) in Palm Springs.

*IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives*, an exhibition curated by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of African American History in Washington, D.C., focuses on dual African-and-Native American ancestry.

"We are very excited," said Michael Hammond, executive director of the museum. "The exhibition offers a glimpse on issues of race and prejudice faced by African-Native Americans throughout history, and how we are still dealing with these issues today."

The free exhibition tells the stories of African-Native Americans' struggles to preserve identity through the lens of policy, community and creative resistance.

"This topic of African-Native Americans is one that touches a great number of individuals through family histories, tribal histories, and personal identities," Kevin Gover, director of the National Museum of the American Indian, said in a press release.

"We find commonalities in our shared past of genocide, alienation from our ancestral homelands, and the exhibition acknowledges the strength and resilience we recognize in one another today" Gover said.



The Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, 219 South Palm Canyon Drive, will hold a free public reception from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Jan. 19.

*IndiVisible* will remain on display in Palm Springs until Nov. 1.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.desertsun.com/story/news/2016/01/12/african-native-american-exhibition-comes-palm-springs/78643756/>

## Sioux Journalist Buys Wounded Knee for a Native American Holocaust Museum

By LACEY LOUWAGIE



WOUNDED KNEE, S.D. (CN) - Tim Giago, a leading Native American journalist and retired publisher, has agreed to purchase the site of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre, to build a Native American holocaust museum there.

Giago, an Oglala Sioux, announced his plans on Dec. 29 in Indian Country Today, one of several newspapers he founded. December 29 was the 125th anniversary of the massacre that killed 150 to 300 Native Americans on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in southwestern South Dakota.

The massacre came because of federal fears of the "Ghost Dance" movement, which was particularly active on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The movement taught that Native Americans had been confined to reservations as punishment for abandoning traditional ways of life, and that practicing the Ghost Dance and rejecting white culture would lead the gods to destroy nonbelievers, Native and Anglo alike.

Falsely believing that Sioux Chief Sitting Bull was a Ghost Dancer, U.S. officials arrested and killed him two weeks before the Wounded Knee Massacre.

On Dec. 29, 1890, the 7th Cavalry surrounded a group of Ghost Dancers at Wounded Knee, slaughtering 150 to 300 Native Americans, including women and children. Many viewed it as payback for the Sioux's victory over Gen. George Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Little Bighorn in 1876.

The Wounded Knee Massacre was the last major confrontation between the U.S. government and Plains Indians, but it was not the last time tension erupted at the site. In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement occupied the town of Wounded Knee for 71 days, from Feb. 27 to May 8, protesting police brutality and government policies

against Native Americans.

Conservative tribal chairman Dick Wilson laid siege to the town with the backing of the federal government. The standoff finally ended after White House officials promised to investigate the American Indian Movement's complaints.

The site is owned by James Czywczynski , a non-native, who had it on the market for more than two years before Giago came forward. Although some tribal members disapproved of Czywczynski selling the land rather than giving it to the tribe, he told Indian Country Today that he deserved to be compensated because his family's business was destroyed in the 1973 Wounded Knee standoff.

Giago grew up in the town of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation and went on to found several publications, including Lakota Times, Indian Country Today and the Sun Country Times. After buying Wounded Knee, he plans to put it into a trust for the Sioux Nation.

"I am 81 years old and I am at that age where I am not looking for any personal gain," he told Indian Country Today. "I figure the best place for Wounded Knee to be is not just owned by the Oglala. It should be owned by all of the nine tribes of the great Sioux nation."

A museum dedicated to the Wounded Knee Massacre already exists in nearby Wall, S.D., but Giago said his vision for the new museum goes beyond the history of the site.

"I'd like to see a Native American Holocaust Museum built on the site. Not just for the people who were killed at Wounded Knee but for all those who suffered at Bear Creek, Washita, Sand Creek and every tribe that had a similar massacre could have a room where they could display their history," he told Indian Country Today.

"People in Germany, France and Italy probably know more about Indian country than people living here in America," Giago added. "Can you imagine a really beautiful Holocaust Museum and a big trade pavilion for Indian artisans and craftspeople? They could set up booths year-round and sell their arts and crafts to the tourists. We would have tourists come from all over the world and stay in Rapid City, go to the restaurants and hotels, take buses to Wounded Knee. It would create over 200 jobs for the people down there. It would be also a boost financially to Rapid City, South Dakota."

Pine Ridge could certainly benefit from the economic boost, as it occupies the poorest counties in the nation, with unemployment rates estimated as high as 90 percent, according to a tribal website.

Giago has already set up a nonprofit organization named The National Historic Site of Wounded Knee Inc. to collect funds for the project.

Giago did not respond to a Monday morning voicemail request for comment or to phone calls made later in the day.

Giago's Sioux name, Nanwica Kciji, means Stand Up for Them. He also founded the

Native American Journalists Association and in 1979 became the first Native American columnist for a South Dakota newspaper, the Rapid City Journal.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.courthousenews.com/2016/01/12/sioux-journalist-buys-wounded-knee-for-a-native-american-holocaust-museum.htm>

## John Adams: 'White Father' to Indian Nations

Alysa Landry

1/12/16

*Editor's note: Voters this year will elect the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. This is the second in a series of 44 stories exploring past presidents' attitudes toward Native Americans, challenges and triumphs regarding tribes, and the federal laws and Indian policies enacted during their terms in office.*

When John Adams took office in March 1797, his concerns about Native Americans came from two fronts: threats from overseas and tensions along the western border.

Fourteen years after the Revolutionary War ended, Great Britain and France continued to occupy territory in North America, and Adams feared either force, allied with Native Americans, could wreak havoc on the young nation. The second president of the United States also inherited land-hungry settlers on the western frontier and growing tensions between fledgling state governments and tribes.

In his [first annual message](#) to Congress, delivered in November 1797, Adams referred to relationships with the Indians as “this unpleasant state of things on our western frontier.” Foreign agents, he said, were trying to “alienate the affections of the Indian nations and to excite them to actual hostilities against the United States.”

The same year, the newly formed Tennessee legislature informed Adams that the Cherokee Indians were occupying their territories as “tenants at will,” or at the forbearance of whites, Clifford Trafzer wrote in his 2009 book “[American Indians American Presidents](#).” In response, Adams [sent a letter](#) to “his beloved chiefs, warriors and children of the Cherokee Nation,” explaining that squatters had gone beyond the boundary established in a 1791 treaty and had protested when the federal government tried to remove them.

In the letter, Adams asked the Cherokee to acknowledge the “sincere friendship of the United States,” but said his “stronger obligations” were to “hear the complaints, and relieve, as far as in my power, the distresses of my white children, citizens of the United States.” The result was the [1798 Treaty of Tellico](#), in which the Cherokee ceded more of their homelands in eastern Tennessee.

The treaty was the last of four enacted during Adams' four years in office, from 1797 to 1801. He also oversaw treaties with the Mohawk, Seneca and Oneida, who relinquished all their lands in the state of New York.

Born in Massachusetts in 1735, Adams was an intellectual, political theorist, attorney, author and statesman. A sixth-generation American, Adams' ancestors immigrated to the colonies in 1638. His first encounter with Native Americans occurred when he was a boy and leaders of the Punkapaug and Neponset tribes called on his father. The visit excited a "fascination" with the Indians, David McCullough wrote in his 2001 biography "[John Adams](#)."

Yet as a leader and one of the founding fathers, Adams harbored a "dread fear of the British unleashing Indian war parties on the frontiers," McCullough wrote. In a letter penned to a friend, Adams called Natives "blood hounds" who, let loose, could scalp men and butcher women and children.

Adams, a delegate to the first and second Continental Congresses, also served as commissioner to France and ambassador to Holland and Great Britain before running for president of the United States in 1789. He came in second to George Washington and served as the nation's first vice president.

The election of 1796 was the first to distinguish between political parties. Adams, a member of the newly formed Federalist Party, won by a narrow margin. He served only one term.

It was a term marked by "paternalistic" attitudes toward Native Americans, said Sara Martin, editor in chief of The Adams Papers, an archiving project overseen by the [Massachusetts Historical Society](#). Much like the other founding fathers, Adams held conflicted beliefs about Natives and their role in the nation's future.

"If you look at it from today, you could call it paternalistic," Martin said. "But back then, his views were similar to others of his race and class."

In his inauguration speech, Adams pledged himself to a spirit of "equity and humanity" toward the Indians, McCullough wrote. He promised to "meliorate their condition by inclining them to be more friendly to us, and our citizens to be more friendly to them." But Adams also ignored existing treaties and established the Indiana Territory in 1800, granting settlers nearly 260,000 acres of land in the Northwest Territory.

"In terms of his Indian policy, at least politically, he very much followed the same path as Washington," Martin said of Adams. "Many of the policies in place during Washington's administration were finalized or funded or enforced during the Adams administration, so it was really more of a continuation of ideology. As president, if Adams thought of Indians, it was in political terms. But if you take a step back and look at his personal writings, you can see the conflict in rhetoric and practice."

Daniel Usner, a history professor at Vanderbilt University, calls Adams' views paradoxical. Although Adams contributed little to the creation of federal Indian policy and, indeed, expressed very little interest in their customs, he "did plenty to embed them... deeply within the founding generation's contrived rationale for American independence from Great Britain," Usner wrote in a [2013 article](#). This "Age of Adams"

established many of the “inconsistencies and shortcomings that have occurred in U.S. Indian policy ever since,” he wrote.

In short, Adams “alternated his sentiments between a derogatory apprehension of Indians’ means of warfare and a condescending admiration for their dignified style of peace-making,” Usner wrote. “This interweaving of dread with delight, righteousness with respect, would endure as a major pattern of ambivalence toward American Indians in popular thought and culture.”

Adams left office in 1801 and was succeeded by Thomas Jefferson. In his later years, he revived his intellectual study of Indians, spending his leisure time reading about their history, culture and religion. Adams died in 1826 at age 90.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/12/john-adams-white-father-indian-nations-162981>

## David Bowie praised for 'gutsy' support of Aboriginal rights

The singer had a lifelong fascination with Australia and owned an inner-city apartment in Sydney

By Jonathan Pearlman, in Sydney

10:17AM GMT 12 Jan 2016

David Bowie has been remembered in Australia for his “gutsy” efforts to expose the struggle for Aboriginal rights in his much-celebrated Let’s Dance video clip, which was filmed in 1983 in a small outback pub.

The singer had a lifelong fascination with Australia and owned an inner-city apartment in Sydney for his frequent visits during the 1980s and early 1990s. He made regular trips to the outback but **was horrified by the racism towards Aborigines.**

“As much as I love this country, it’s probably one of the most racially intolerant in the world, well in line with South Africa,” he told Rolling Stone in 1983.

“I mean, in the north, there’s unbelievable intolerance. The Aborigines can’t even buy their drinks in the same bars-they have to go round the back and get them through what’s called a ‘dog hatch’.”



The singer had a lifelong fascination with Australia and owned an inner-city apartment in Sydney

Bowie confronted this racism in the Let's Dance clip, which starred two young Aboriginal performers, Terry Roberts and Jolene King, who are seen dancing but also performing manual labour such as scrubbing floors and dragging machinery through a busy city street.

David Mallett, who made the clip, said last year that it was “intentionally anti-racist”. Bowie told the Australian music program Countdown in 1983 that the clip was “a direct statement about integration of one culture with another”.

In an interview in 2013, King told Fairfax Media: “**[The clip] showed the rest of the world that there are Indigenous people** here in Australia, and that we’re not this textbook carbon copy of somebody standing there with a spear; that there are modern Aboriginals, and this is one version.”



The video was filmed in the only pub in the town, which is about 400 miles north-west of Sydney

Ed Gibbs, the co-writer and producer of a recent documentary about Bowie’s time in Australia, said the singer was determined to highlight the racism he had experienced during his travels in Australia.

"I can't imagine that many other artists like that making a statement like that at that time," Gibbs told ABC News.

"But as we know he had decades of very gutsy creative behaviour throughout his life and career, right up until a few days ago when he released his latest record."

**The Let's Dance clip** was also credited with putting the small town of Carinda on the map. The video was filmed in the only pub in the town, which is about 400 miles north-west of Sydney.

"When we have tourists come through they always ask where David Bowie did the video clip," Marie Draper, a bartender, told ABC News.

"I would say now that he's passed away there would probably be a lot more that would come."

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/12094490/David-Bowie-praised-for-gutsy-support-of-Aboriginal-rights.html>

## **Indigenous and Afro-Caribbeans say Nicaragua coercing them on canal**

*Rama-Kriol leaders green light next steps toward consent, but some community leaders say it's under government pressure*

January 12, 2016 5:00AM ET

by [Kate Kilpatrick](#)

Leaders of Nicaragua's indigenous and Afro-Caribbean communities say government officials are pressuring them to sign a document consenting to the proposed [\\$50 billion Nicaragua Canal](#) passing through their autonomous territory.

Dr. María Luisa Acosta, an attorney for the Center for Legal Assistance to Indigenous Peoples (CALPI) who has represented indigenous communities in Nicaragua for the past two decades, said she received a call from Rama-Kriol leaders Rupert Allen Clair Duncan and Santiago Thomas on Saturday.

"They said the government is pressuring them to sign papers and to give up the territory, and they don't want to," said Acosta. "But they feel a lot of pressure and they have told them in many ways, 'We don't want this. We need a lawyer. We need to know more and



we cannot do this this way. We need somebody independent to oversee this process.’ And [the government representatives] just said, ‘Don’t worry — just sign.’”

“It’s a lot of psychological pressure,” she added.

The Rama-Kriol Territorial Government (GTR-K), the ruling authority over the six Rama (indigenous) and three Kriol (Afro-Caribbean) communities that make up the South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS) of southeastern Nicaragua, released a statement on Sunday denouncing the pressure, and calling on Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega to “stop this violation of human rights and constitutional guarantees that the [officials] seek to commit.”

The canal megaproject has been mired in controversy since its beginning, with opponents marking it as a new era of colonialism in Latin America.

In 2013, [Chinese telecom billionaire Wang Jing](#) and his HKND Group holding company were granted a 50-year concession — renewable for an additional 50 years — to build and operate the canal. Opponents say the no-bid concession, fast-tracked through the National Assembly in a day, with no public debate, violates Nicaragua’s Constitution as well as international environmental treaties.

With media reports in October of Wang’s [plummeting wealth](#), the feasibility of the ambitious project has been thrown further in question. In late November, HKND announced that construction for the project was on hold until the end of 2016.

With no indication of construction returning anytime soon, it is unclear why the Rama-Kriol people would be pressured to consent at this moment.

The three officials mentioned by name in the statement released Sunday are Michael Campbell of ProNicaribe; Danilo Chang, spokesperson for the Grand Interoceanic Canal of Nicaragua megaproject in the Southern Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACS); and Rubén López, chief executive of the Southern Caribbean Autonomous Region.

The Rama-Kriol territory consists of more than 1,500 square miles of land and an additional 1,700 square miles of sea territory, as well as 22 keys, or low-lying islands.

The title of full control for their traditional land was transferred by the State of Nicaragua to the nine communities of the Rama-Kriol Territory in a ceremony involving President Daniel Ortega in July 2010.

In defending their autonomy, the Rama-Kriol and their legal advocates point to Art. 24 of [Law 445](#), in which “the State recognizes the right that indigenous and ethnic communities have over the lands they traditionally occupy ... and recognizes and guarantees their inalienability, unseizability, and imprescriptibility.”

In order to dredge the canal through their territory, the Nicaragua government must receive “free, prior and informed” consent from the indigenous and Afro-Caribbean communities affected.

The GTR-K have requested legal assistance and an independent international observer to supervise the consent process. They have also asked to see the full documentation from the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the proposed canal.

According to the GTR-K's statement, “the officials tell them that the lawyer is not necessary and that they will explain the ESIA and send the agreement to the UN once it has been signed, all while continuing to pressure them to sign it.”

Each of the nine Rama-Kriol communities have a seven-member directive board that is democratically elected by the community. For more than a year residents of the Rama-Kriol Territory have spoken of the Nicaragua government creating “parallel governments” that challenge the authority of their local leaders.

The two communities that would be most directly affected by the canal project and its subprojects are Bangkukuk Taik and Monkey Point.

[Al Jazeera America visited the Rama village of Bangkukuk Taik](#), the proposed site for a 5.4-square-mile deepwater port, in February 2015. At that time, apprehension among residents was high.



In December, Carlos Wilson Billis was ousted as president of the Rama community of Bangkukuk Taik, the proposed site for a massive deepwater port for the Nicaragua Inter-oceanic Grand Canal. His supporters say it was because he opposes the canal. Alex Garcia for Al Jazeera America

“It have me worried what the government trying to do to us, to Indian, Rama people,” said Bangkukuk President Carlos Wilson Billis, speaking in the Creole English characteristic of the Miskito Coast. “I’m going to fight it till the last as president.”

But that fight got more difficult in recent months.

Wilson filed a complaint on December 14 alleging that government officials had certified and attempted to install a new president of Bangkukuk, although his term is not up until March 2017.

Acosta said she believes community leaders and members are also being bribed with gasoline and cash to support the canal and pro-canal leaders.

Michael Campbell, of ProNicaribe, did not respond to Al Jazeera’s calls or emails requesting comment by time of publication.

However, at a government-run panel discussion on autonomy held in Bluefields, the RACS capital, in May 2015, Campbell expressed his concern that “excessive democracy” could deter much-needed investment in the region.

“Communal property is administrated by, and is a sovereign area of, the indigenous and Afro-descendant territories and their communities. There, what we have to guarantee is that efficient processes of free, prior and informed consultation are organized when it comes to private investment, or investment that comes from outside the indigenous and Afro-descendant territories. The processes have to be efficient,” he said. “We cannot have excessive democracy that ends up scaring away investment.”

According to an [article](#) in La Prensa newspaper on Monday, Clair, the Monkey Point president and GTR-K member, described what he viewed as intimidation tactics that had occurred over the weekend.

“[T]hey did not allow us to use a legal counselor to review the document in question, and during the three days, they just kept us enclosed, and today (January 10) they even brought policemen to watch the door and keep anyone from entering or exiting the building. They also took us from the territorial government building and placed us in a national government building to be able to control us,” he said.

Clair also told La Prensa that the government had verbally offered \$1 million a year for the permanent lease of the autonomous lands that would be required for the canal and its subprojects, but it was not clear who stated that number.

When reached by telephone on Monday afternoon, Clair said he and Wilson are among just 21 or 22 members of the 63-person communal governments who continue to oppose the strongarm tactics and financial bribes of the Sandinista government.

“I think we need to move quickly and go to the community and make sure they understand what is going on, get them feedback,” he said. “This fight is not like before. Before, we took time, we go to court. And now this government comes with a stronger way, we need to do something quickly, quickly.”

The GTR-K released a second statement on Monday evening accusing Clair, Thomas and Acosta of making unauthorized and false statements on behalf of the GTR-K regarding the consent process.

Johnny Hodgson, a Sandinista party secretary and the president's delegate to the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCS), was adamant that the consent process has been fair and transparent, stressing that the consultations started back in January 2015.

“There has been no pressure from the government to the Ramas,” he said.

Responding to a followup question over email about the alleged bribes, Hodgson stated, “There is no one that can say they got money or was offered money to vote in favor of the consent.”

*Correction: An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that only an executive summary of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) has been made public. The [full report](#) can be found on the HKND Group website.*

**Direct Link:** <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2016/1/12/indigenous-leaders-say-nicaragua-pressuring-them-to-agree-to-canal.html>

# Village votes to keep seal depicting white founder fighting Native American

Whitesboro clerk said seal has ‘never been a controversy’ within New York village despite it appearing to show founder strangling a member of the Oneida tribe



Residents of Whitesboro voted 157-55 to keep village seal portraying what they claim is a ‘wrestling match’ between founder Richard White and a Native American man.

Photograph: AP

**Scott Bixby** in New York

Wednesday 13 January 2016 18.23 GMT Last modified on Wednesday 13 January 2016 20.44 GMT

A village in upstate New York has overwhelmingly voted in favor of keeping an emblem showing a white man in combat with a Native American that has perturbed outsiders for decades.

In a non-binding vote conducted on Monday night, residents of the village of Whitesboro voted 157-55 in support of keeping a seal that, depending on your perspective, either depicts village founder Hugh White strangling a member of the Oneida Indian Nation or, as the town’s historical society claims, depicts a friendly wrestling match that helped foster good relations between White and the Oneida tribe.

“Whitesboro views this seal as a moment in time when good relations were fostered,” village clerk Dana Nimey-Olney told the Guardian. “It’s not a controversy within the village, it never has been a controversy within the village.”

The current iteration of the seal, which appears on village stationary and police vehicles, is based on a model that “goes back to the 1800s”, according to Nimey-Olney. The modern example was originally designed by a local artist in 1963 in celebration of Whitesboro’s sesquicentennial. The seal has faced cyclical tempests of criticism since the 1970s, when a notice filed with the village board called attention to the close resemblance of White’s wrestling maneuver to strangulation.

“The hands of Hugh White were moved farther down on the Native American’s body to make it look like it was more on his shoulders than on his neck” in response to the notice, said Nimey-Olney, but four decades later, that still may appear too close for comfort for outsiders.

As former mayor Richard Pugh put it: “It’s a seal that takes a little explaining.”

According to village historian Judy Mallozzi, who documents Whitesboro’s history on the village’s website, the seal depicts nothing more than an amiable bout of horseplay between the chief of the Oneida tribe and White, who reputedly became New York’s first white inhabitant west of the Mohawk river in 1784.

After being challenged to a wrestling match by the chief, White, who “dared not risk being browbeaten by an Indian nor did he want to be called a coward”, accepted the challenge and immediately felled his opponent. After the chief, who purportedly declared “you good fellow too much”, declared White the victor, he “became a hero in the eyes of the Oneida Indians”.

The veracity of the story, which also notes that White was “required to exercise much diplomacy in dealing with his red neighbors”, may be beyond verification. But according to Nimey-Olney, who is not a resident of the village of Whitesboro and could not vote in Monday’s poll, the citizens of a village that was once only famous as the hometown of Philadelphia Flyers goalie Robert Esche do not see the seal as anything other than a reminder of a period when the area’s residents were in racial harmony.

“Everybody keeps talking about it being a choking incident,” said Nimey-Olney. “I don’t know if they think that the wrestling story is something new, something that came about after this seal was drawn, but the wrestling story does go back to the founding of the village. We’ve always looked at it as a positive event in the area’s history, because it’s when the residents and the local tribe began having a positive relationship.

“It’s sad that people who don’t know the history have come in and labeled it something bad.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/13/whitesboro-village-seal-vote-founder-native-american>

## 'The Revenant' showcases Native Americans in Hollywood

Parent Category: [Life](#)

Published on Wednesday, 13 January 2016 18:24

Written by Red Nation Film Festival Media Release

LOS ANGELES - Red Nation Films is proud to congratulate Leonardo DiCaprio, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and the cast and crew of The Revenant for their Golden Globe awards. That’s especially true for the movie’s Native performers, including Forrest Goodluck, Duane Howard, Arthur RedCloud, and newcomer Melaw Nakehk’o, who stole the show at the end with her haunting look.

DiCaprio highlighted the importance of Natives in his acceptance speech Sunday night. “I want to share this award with all the First Nations people represented in this film and all the indigenous communities around the world,” he said as the music tried to play him off the stage. “It is time that we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests.”

“Leonardo DiCaprio is today’s Brando,” says actor/director Joanelle Romero, founder of Red Nations Films and its annual film festivals. “Not since Sacheen Littlefeather took the stage at the 1973 Oscars has anyone spoken this much truth to Hollywood. Like Marlon Brando and a few others, Leo gets it.”

The Revenant is further proof that indigenous-based movies can not only win awards, but succeed at the box office. In its opening weekend, it earned \$39.8 million, narrowly losing to Star Wars: The Force Awakens. With the Oscar buzz it’s getting, it’s likely to join Avatar and the Twilight series in the pantheon of Native-themed hits.

Hollywood’s Natives are already working on modern-day shows such as Longmire, The Red Road, and House of Cards, but they can do so much more. “The American public wants to see and experience our stories,” says Romero, who’s developing a thriller titled Second Sunrise. “We can’t afford to wait 25 years for another Dances with Wolves or The Revenant. Supporting Native filmmaking isn’t just good policy, it’s smart business.”

Red Nation Films is dedicated to creating and sharing indigenous-themed entertainment. Its next festival, the 3rd Native Women in Film & Television, will take place February 25-28, 2016, in Los Angeles. The annual Red Nations Film Festival and Awards Show



happens every November during Native American Heritage Month.

For more information, visit Red Nation Film Festival at [www.rednationff.com](http://www.rednationff.com).

**Direct Link:** <http://nativetimes.com/index.php/life/entertainment/12613-the-revenant-showcases-native-americans-in-hollywood>

## This Native American tribe on Long Island is trying to raise its language from the dead

**The World in Words**

January 14, 2016 · 1:30 PM EST

By [Alina Simone](#) ([follow](#))



Staff at the Wuneechanunk Shinnecock Preschool.

A daunting task confronts the Shinnecock Indian Nation.

Walk into the Wuneechanunk Preschool on a typical weekday morning and you'll be greeted by the smell of burning sage and words unheard anywhere else in the world: Children singing in the Shinnecock language.

Yes, this is the only Shinnecock reservation, and it's a small one, about 650 people. But the reason the sound of Shinnecock being spoken is so unusual is that *there are* no fluent speakers of Shinnecock left — haven't been for more than a century. With New York City only an hour and a half drive west, the pressure to assimilate has always been intense for the Native Americans of Long Island. That's the topic of this week's World in Words podcast.



Teacher Chenoa Curry with Wuneechanunk Shinnecock preschooler Jaycen King.

“It didn't seem like a reasonable thing to spend their time and effort on for their children if it wasn't going to be helpful for their future,” says Tina Tarrant, the tribe’s language researcher. “And people don't imagine that your language is going to disappear entirely. That's, like, such a strange concept that people don't think of it.”

But a few years ago, Tarrant came up with an even stranger concept: bringing that vanished language back. Even as a child, she had collected Shinnecock words the way other kids collected baseball cards.

“Well I just always wondered why people weren't saying more things in our language, because we always talked about culture, we always did the songs and the dances, [but] we didn't use our own words to describe what it was we were doing. So I started looking for the words, common phrases, nicknames — little bits and pieces.”

So when she had her *own* child, it made sense to give her a Shinnecock name: Tohanash.



Tina Tarrant, language researcher with the Shinnecock Indian Nation, with her daughter Tohanash Tarrant, former manager of the Wuneechanunk Shinnecock Preschool.

“She's named after a hawk who flew by my cousin's house, *my mother's* house and *my* house the morning that she was born,” Tarrant says, laughing at the recollection.

That was in the 1980s; hardly anyone on the reservation had a Shinnecock name back then. Tohanash is now 31 and she tells me that her generation was probably the first in three generations to have Algonquin names. “My mom made sure all six children had names in Shinnecock,” she adds.

Tarrant's decision was personal, she tells me, but it was also strategic.

“The reason for putting these unusual names in the local community was so that our words would continue to be spoken, and [tribe members] would have a firm understanding of at least one or two words in our language, even if it was their own names.”

It worked. Soon, other members were asking questions about Shinnecock words, wanting to give *their* children native names too. Tarrant saw hope for a larger revival of the language, and organized some workshops. But the challenges were intense. Aside from a handful of surviving words, there was only *one written source* for the Shinnecock language: a Bible translated by a native man, Cockenoe de Long Island, in the mid-1600s.

Tarrant had no institutional support in her effort. No money. Not even a college degree. It took years of effort to track the Bible down — on microfiche from a library in Scotland of all places. The tribe itself was too busy fighting a protracted battle for federal recognition to make language revival a priority. You'd think being surrounded by the uber-wealthy would give the Shinnecock an advantage over other tribes. Not the case.

Towering hedges stretch down Southampton's streets for miles, obscuring the multi-million dollar homes of celebrities like Rachel Ray and Howard Stern. But unless you count lending their name to one of the world's most exclusive golf clubs, the Shinnecock don't share in that wealth.

In a place where the average house sells for almost \$2 million, the average Shinnecock family makes barely \$14,000 a year. And Tohanash says that's not the only drawback to being an urban, East Coast tribe.

"There are a lot of issues ... relating to sales of the land or leases that were never made good on, so we lost a lot of territory. That has always been a challenge for us. Here we are, a small Native American community in the middle of the home of millionaires. So we have to take these millionaires to court for our land? It's kind of an uphill battle for us."

But in 2010, Tina's scholarly goals dovetailed with the tribe's judicial ones, when the Shinnecock became the 565th tribe to be recognized by the federal government. Two years later, the tribe voted to build a new pre-school and a radical concept was floated: to incorporate Shinnecock language into the curriculum. The school opened its doors this past summer with Tohanash as its manager. It was up to a team of seven people — Tohanash, her mother, and five teachers— to figure out how to bring Shinnecock back to life.

"Everybody was kind of in their beginning stages of learning of Algoquin, and we had to work with everybody on their different levels." Tohanash recalls. They started with simple words that could be used in the classroom and translating popular songs such as Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

Tohanash has since left her job at the school, but the language program continues. Clearly there's a long way to go before kids are watching Dora the Explorer or thumbing through apps in Shinnecock. But people are starting to use native words around the reservation — beyond just "Hey, Tohanash!" Simple things like "good morning."

"It's very interesting," Tohanash says. "People are *owning* it. They're owning their identity, by just seeing these words on a regular basis and starting to use them with each other."

It's a big change from when Tina first launched her effort to reintroduce Shinnecock back in the '80s.

"The hardest thing is to feel like you don't know your own culture," Tina admits.

Looking back at all the challenges to breathing life into the Shinnecock language, this hurdle — the psychological barrier — may have been the biggest one. As Tohanash explains, putting aside "that bad feeling aside that this is not something that I know, it's something that you can learn," is an ongoing process.

“It's OK that we weren't taught this growing up,” she says. “This is something that we're bringing back and we need to embrace.”

Owning your identity. Even in the Hamptons, you can't put a price on that.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-01-14/native-american-tribe-long-island-trying-raise-its-language-dead>